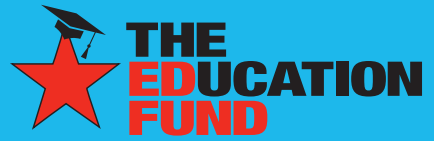


The Education Fund's

# IDEAS



FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

with impact

2006-2007

M-DCPS Teachers Share Easy-To-Use Projects

Find out why  
G.E.E.K.S. are cool

Get dollars for your  
classroom

"MATH"-sterpieces  
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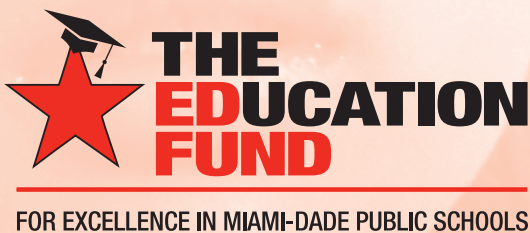


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# The Education Fund: Bringing Excellence to Public Education!

**T**he Education Fund enlists the support of the private sector to improve Miami-Dade schools and bring excellence to public education. This work reaches all 350+ schools and all 20,000+ teachers in Miami-Dade Public Schools, and benefits thousands of students.

Currently, The Education Fund offers more than a dozen different initiatives to help our public schools. The IMPACT II program, which encompasses this catalog and the companion Idea EXPO, is one example.



## CONTACT US: The Education Fund

900 NE 125th Street, Suite 110 , North Miami, FL 33161  
305.892.5099 (phone) • 305.892.5096 (fax) • [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org)



**Support Public Schools in Miami-Dade County**  
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When you buy the Education License Plate in Miami-Dade County, you are donating \$20 directly to The Education Fund.

This money will be used for special programs that tax dollars just can't cover – things like classroom grants, equipment and books for school libraries, student scholarships, and this publication.

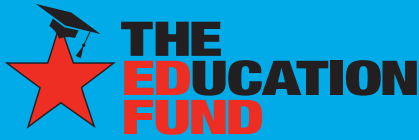
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FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



### Boost student achievement with the Brain Guy!

The "Brain Guy," **Marcus Conyers**, is an internationally renowned speaker and author. In his keynote address, "BrainSMART Strategies for Increasing Student Learning," he'll show you how you can positively influence student achievement by teaching in ways that the brain learns best. Plus, following the keynote, he will lead a workshop, "Wiring the Brain to Read" where he'll take you on a fascinating journey of discovery by demonstrating how the brain learns to read and how students can best learn from the texts they study in school.

Conyers helps districts increase student achievement through a combination of his research-based keynotes and staff development. He led a three-year Florida Department of Education initiative that shared his BrainSMART Teaching model with teachers across the state. He has also appeared on 600 TV and radio shows and shared his practical strategies live with 100,000 administrators and teachers as well as with major corporations including Ford, Kodak and Sony.

# The Education Fund's 17th Annual IMPACT IDEA EXPO

## THE TEACHER CONFERENCE

Saturday, October 7, 2006

Sheraton Miami Mart Hotel, Conference Center

8:15 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Sponsored by:



with additional support  
from Office Depot

The IMPACT II Idea Expo is a teacher-to teacher curriculum conference featuring workshops for ALL k-12 teachers.

### *Pre-register by September 28, 2006!*

Space is limited so reserve your tickets today! The first 100 teachers to pre-register receive an extra visit to the Center for Educational Materials for free classroom supplies.

### *Special features:*

- Don't miss this opportunity to hear nationally-renowned speaker and author Marcus Conyers. His master teaching session is geared toward all teachers, new & experienced!
- More than 70 standards-based workshops!
- Seven Master Plan TEC Points
- Exhibits
- Continental Breakfast and Lunch
- Prizes
- Free curriculum materials
- Become eligible for quick and easy Adapter grants!

#### **Door prizes**

- Scholastic books
- Publix gift certificates
- Three refurbished computers
- Gift baskets

#### **Giveaways from:**

- Office Depot
- Original Impressions
- Get Smart

#### **Grand Prize**



Support for the Idea Expo is also provided by State Farm Insurance.

# The Education Fund is making a difference in the lives of children by:

- \$5.3 million in free supplies for classrooms
- 2,000+ struggling students provided with the one-on-one tutoring they needed to learn to read
- \$1.7 million in classroom grants to teachers
- 7,150 refurbished computers and training for underprivileged children and their families
- 850,000 trilingual Parent Resource Guides to help parents get involved in our public schools
- 4,216 hours of in-class mentoring to help new teachers
- \$331,291 in funding for the arts in our public schools
- 5 million+ media impressions in a campaign to educate the public on teaching quality
- \$3.4 million leveraged in leadership training to help assistant principals assume the role of principals in our hardest-to-staff schools
- And more!

## Six Easy Ways You Can Help The Education Fund Spread Excellence:

1. Buy a "Support Education" license plate!  
See inside back cover.
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3. Honor a loved one by making a donation in their name.
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5. Donate stock or property.
6. Make a cash donation or use your credit card to donate online at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org).

Call Mimi Pink  
today at 305-892-5099, ext. 21 to  
find out how you can  
make charitable giving a part of your portfolio!



# The Education Fund's IMPACT II: A Network of Ideas

**I**MPECT II is a program of The Education Fund that focuses on strengthening curriculum, student achievement and leadership in Miami-Dade County Public Schools by identifying and connecting teachers who exemplify professionalism and creativity in their classrooms. This comprehensive network has specially designed programs that encompass beginning teachers to experienced teachers through the original Network Model, Teachers Network Leadership Institute and the New Teacher Initiative.

## NETWORK MODEL

Teachers who have developed successful classroom teaching methods are given grants to package and market their proven projects through the *Ideas with IMPACT* catalog, the Idea EXPO and Idea Packets that contain curriculum materials such as lesson plans, worksheets and resource lists.

**Disseminator grants** – Help teachers further develop and disseminate proven practices they have used successfully in their own classroom. Apply by Jan. 15, 2007.

**Ideas with IMPACT catalog** – Explore this resource of new teaching ideas. Projects can be used exactly as they are or can be modified to meet a classroom's special needs. Contact the disseminator of the idea for more information.

**The Idea EXPO** – The Teacher Conference – Get new ideas and make connections with more than 75 experienced teachers during the IMPACT II project display exhibition and workshop sessions. Special features include a keynote session on using brain-based research in the classroom, a luncheon and free curriculum packets.

**Adapter grants** – Available for any project in the IMPACT II network of ideas from the past 16 years

*At the EXPO, Marcus Conyers, the “Brain Guy,” will give a keynote address: “BrainSMART Strategies for Student Learning” and a special workshop: “Wiring the Brain to Read.”*

(listed at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org)). Just connect with the disseminator of the idea, request an Idea Packet and apply to receive funds to implement in your classroom.

## TEACHERS NETWORK LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (TNLI)

The Teachers Network Leadership Institute (TNLI) is an action research initiative that connects education policy with actual classroom practice to improve student achievement. IMPACT II provides a monthly forum for teachers to formulate their research, publish their findings, strategize their dissemination and discuss current education issues. To become an action research fellow and receive a grant to conduct action research in your classroom, please contact The Education Fund, 305-892-5099, ext. 18 or apply by September 15, 2006 using the application found in the insert of this catalog.

## NEW TEACHER INITIATIVE

IMPACT II connects new teachers to veteran teachers, resources and a network of ongoing support from various programs of The Education Fund.

1) The Idea EXPO – The Teacher Conference has special features for



new teachers including workshops on classroom management and opportunities to network with colleagues from across the county. It is an ideal forum to link up with veteran teachers and learn their tried and true teaching strategies.

2) Adapter grants are a quick and easy way to implement a disseminator teacher's idea in a beginning teacher's classroom. Along with the funds, you not only receive a detailed Idea Packet with lesson plans and resource list, but coaching from the disseminator teacher. Substitution coverage is available to visit a veteran teacher's classroom or vice-versa.

3) New teacher Web site of daily classroom specials, tips and "ask an expert" section is managed by national IMPACT II – The Teachers Network at [www.teachersnetwork.org](http://www.teachersnetwork.org).

## HOW IMPACT II CAN WORK FOR YOU

ATTEND the IMPACT II Idea EXPO – The Teacher Conference. Look for a conference registration form in the inserts of this catalog, register online at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org) or call 305-892-5099, ext. 18 for more information. Marcus Conyers of BrainSMART will be giving a keynote address and a master teaching session at this year's IDEA EXPO on Saturday, October 7, 2006.

BECOME an IMPACT II disseminator or an action research fellow and be featured in next year's *Ideas with IMPACT* catalog. IMPACT II awards \$750 disseminator grants to educators willing to share the successful teaching ideas they have designed and implemented in their classrooms. Fellowships, in the amount of \$750, for action research are also offered. Apply at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org) or use applications found in this catalog's inserts.

## APPLY for an IMPACT II Adapter Grant to purchase materials to adapt one of the ideas featured in this catalog or past years' catalogs.

Here's how to qualify:

1. Select an idea (from past or current catalogs\*) at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org).
2. Attend EXPO and sign-up for workshop on that idea.

or

Request an Idea Packet and discuss with disseminator how to implement the project idea.

3. Complete Adapter application online or go to page 5 of insert.

\* For information on the past 16 years of IMPACT II projects, visit The Education Fund's Web site at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org).

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You could win airfare for two  
aboard Southwest Airlines!

See insert or register online at  
[www.educationfund.org/expo.html](http://www.educationfund.org/expo.html)

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If you designated The Education Fund during the campaign that took place in the fall of 2005 and your name does not appear on this list, please call Mimi Pink at 305-892-5099, ext. 21.



# With Wong's Way: Modifying Student Behavior Using a Viable Systems Approach



## STAFF

Don Deresz is a National Board Certified Teacher in early-adolescent science who has taught for Miami-Dade County Public Schools for more than 30 years. More information about Mr. Deresz can be found at <http://teachers.dadeschools.net/dderesz>.

## MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

The program has been field-tested in middle-school settings by several teachers. Materials required are "The First Days of School" by Harry K. Wong and Rosemary T. Wong, a pack of 3" x 5" index cards and pens/pencils.

**T**HIS PROGRAM PROVIDES A FRAMEWORK TO ASSIST TEACHERS IN MANAGING A CLASSROOM USING SUGGESTIONS FROM "THE FIRST DAYS OF SCHOOL" BY HARRY K. WONG AND ROSEMARY T. WONG.

Middle-school students will benefit the most from the structure of this teacher-tested and student-directed behavioral modification and assessment program. Each class of students represents a different learning environment with a varied palette of learners, but this program provides a process that promotes a classroom community that is conducive to learning for any and all students. This program scaffolds from the procedures and structure recommended by the Wongs' book which requires a recording process (p.150), a blend of strategies from several other pedagogical books and articles, and the Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Code of Student Conduct.

## STUDENTS

Most appropriate for any class of middle-school students (Grades 6-9).

*This program improves student learning by providing a classroom structure that is conducive to learning. This systems approach helps teachers keep control of their classroom as well as help unruly students improve their behavior.*

### Don Deresz

Biscayne Nature Center for Environmental Education  
6767 Crandon Boulevard  
Key Biscayne, FL 33149  
Mail Code: 9771  
Telephone: 305-361-6767, Ext. 115  
Fax: 305-361-7061  
e-mail: [deresz\\_d@firn.edu](mailto:deresz_d@firn.edu)  
Principal: Dr. Gus Loret-de-Mola

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Trust**

# KAIZEN! Little by Little ...

**L**ITTLE BY LITTLE, BIT BY BIT, I AM IMPROVING EVERY DAY." Using principles of Kaizen, the Japanese approach to continuous improvement, this program provides students with skills and strategies they can use throughout their school career and into the world of work. It focuses on academic progress (work habits), personal-social traits (attitudes toward learning), careers (making appropriate choices) and health (proper nutrition).

This program is also based on research done by Greg Brigman, Ph.D. and B.E. Goodman on a group counseling and classroom guidance model called Student Success Skills (SSS). To make a greater impact on the students, this program is presented as a series of fun-filled workshops led by a counselor. The classroom teacher schedules the date and time of the 45-60 minute workshop (preferably during the social studies period) for eight to nine sessions.

The plan incorporates weekly goal setting, progress monitoring, modeling and coaching, interactive application learning and critical life skills. It strives to improve self-efficacy, teach self-management skills, promote nutrition, build confidence, and offer support and encouragement that will lead to academic success. It includes memorable hints/cues (sign language, body peps, etc.) to remind students that they can take control of their learning, and to put forth maximum effort.

## STUDENTS

This plan is most appropriate for upper elementary grade levels, but is adaptable for primary and intermediate grades.

## STAFF

Alma J. Major Dean is currently a doctoral candidate and has been an M-DCPS teacher for 21 years, teaching at Redland and Claude Pepper Elementary and counseling at F.C. Martin Elementary. She has been

awarded IMPACT II Disseminator and Adapter grants as well as a Teacher Mini-Grant for Wednesday Wizards, which became a five-year addition to Claude Pepper's math and science curriculum.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Refer to the Idea Packet for instructional objectives, lesson plans, and lists of materials, equipment, and audiovisuals.



## STANDARDS

PS 1.0: Student accepts responsibility for behavior

1.6: Understands the concept of personal responsibility

PS 3.0: Student begins to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that contribute to effective learning

1.4: Knows that effort and persistence positively affect learning

5.0: Student develops awareness of the career-planning process

5.4: Recognizes that skills learned in school and through other experiences might be used in future jobs

HCA 4.0: The student knows how to use goal-setting and decision-making skills that enhance health

4-4: Recognizes that decisions about personal behavior may be healthy or unhealthy

*This program provides students with self-management skills and learning strategies they can use throughout their school career and into the world of work.*

### Alma J. Major Dean

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Principal: Pamela F. Brown

### Sponsored by:

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# JEWELS

Originally a Citibank Success Fund Grant



**T**HE PURPOSE OF JEWELS IS TO TEACH BUSINESS SKILLS THROUGH A VOCATIONAL PROJECT WHILE PROVIDING A SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP TO BUILD

**SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-DETERMINATION.** Many of these at-risk girls have low self-esteem and feel helpless about making changes in their lives. Learning how to start and run a business provides an opportunity for students who struggle academically to be successful in another area and it empowers them to take action in their own lives. When their confidence soars, they become more successful in all areas of their lives, including academics.

The students, guided by the mentor teachers, make all the company decisions regarding what products to make, advertising, budgeting and planning using a timeline. They also took surveys to guide their decisions and to determine the best-sellers. Students involved developed a greater understanding of the economic system and the responsibilities of operating a business. Life skills in sales and handling money were some of the many meaningful, functional tasks the students gained.

## STUDENTS

Twenty-five at-risk teenage girls, many of whom have learning disabilities or are in special education, participated. The majority of students were in the 11th grade, but 12th grade students also participated. All are in the GEMS club – Girls Educated and Motivated for Success. Originally they were to meet once a week, but the students insisted on meeting twice a week.

## STAFF

Zuzel Gomez and Veronica Martin have been team-teaching in special education programs for eight years. They have both been involved in the mentoring club GEMS since 2002 with Ms. Martin becoming lead

sponsor in 2003. Both teachers have received several grants for vocational programs for both special education population and to support the GEMS club. The project JEWELS became a component of GEMS this year, as one more tool to teach the girls self-determination and business skills.

## MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Jewelry sets are made using polymer clay, metal, silver, glass, plastic and ceramic beads, stones, wire, hemp, ribbon, clasps, cement/glue and jewelry tools. Paper and poster boards for survey, signs, invitations and flyers are needed. Jewelry was sold at trunk shows and open houses at school and at an art gallery throughout the year.

*Real-world learning opportunities not only taught day-to-day entrepreneurial skills, but also encouraged perseverance, responsibility, cooperation, and integrity among the at-risk students.*

**Zuzel Gomez**  
**Veronica Martin**

North Miami Beach Senior High  
1247 NE 167 Street  
North Miami Beach, FL 33162  
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Fax: 305-949-0491  
e-mail: zgomez@dadeschools.net  
and vmartin@dadeschools.net  
Principal: Raymond Fontana

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# A "Muse" um Connection

**T**HIS COLLABORATIVE PROJECT IS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO UTILIZE PROJECT/OBJECT-BASED LEARNING USING MUSEUM ARTIFACTS, OBJECTS, PAINTINGS, SCULPTURES AND COLLECTIBLES FROM VARIOUS MUSEUMS AROUND THE WORLD, IN ORDER TO TEACH THE "BIG IDEAS" THROUGH INQUIRY-BASED INSTRUCTION, USING TECHNOLOGY AS ITS VEHICLE. Object-based learning is an approach to teaching that places man-made or natural objects, artifacts of historical significance or the ordinary "stuff" of everyday life at the center of study. Through the Understanding by Design model, students are given essential questions to ponder as they observe, study, analyze, interpret, and make conclusions on a particular object. Students visit three partnering museums, two to three times per month. Each nine weeks, the students create an exhibit which demonstrates mastery of the related grade-level content, which is tied to a school-wide theme. They train as docents learning presentation skills as they guide their school-mates through these classroom exhibits. This project also allows students to "travel" via the Internet to museums they may never see first-hand and compare them to ones they have visited.

## STUDENTS

The target students are in grades k-5. Students work collaboratively on exhibits, which develops their decision-making and critical-thinking skills.

## STAFF

Rosa Duarte is in her 30th year as a teacher in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Holding a master's degree in ESE, she specialized in autism and has been a staffing specialist in Region 4 and a district support teacher for the autistic program. She then received her educational specialist in computer applications, and in 1996,

became the technology coordinator as well as the computer teacher, Web master, reading plus manager, GradeBook manager and Citibank FamilyTech trainer and coordinator at Southside Elementary. She has been awarded The Education Fund's Citibank Success Fund, AT&T TeachNet and IMPACT II grants.

## MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Internet for research, various art supplies and building materials, depending on the particular exhibit created, are needed for this project.



## STANDARDS

Addresses National Education Technology Standards (NETS) in language arts, art, social studies, science, mathematics and technology.

*Museums contain an amazing, often priceless, wealth of knowledge, and yet we never optimize the learning process from students' visits. Museum education opens another dimension to the way students learn and the way teachers teach.*

**Rosa Duarte**  
Southside Elementary Museums  
Magnet School  
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Miami, FL 33130  
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Fax: 305-381-6237  
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e-mail: Duarte\_r@firn.edu  
Principal: Maria Gonzalez

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**Trust**

# Teaching Early Childhood African-American Studies through Fine Arts



**FAMILIARIZING YOUNGSTERS WITH SELECTED AFRICAN AMERICANS' ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FINE ARTS INSTILLS IN THEM A SENSE OF PRIDE IN THEIR HERITAGE.** A deeper understanding of African-American studies benefits those of other cultures as well. In this year-long curriculum, students learn about African-American literature, music, art and dance through stories about writers such as Zora Neale Hurston and James Weldon Johnson, and artists such as the sculptress Augusta Savage.

Young children need learning experiences that provide hands-on activity. Throughout the year, students execute various art projects reflecting the work of the artists they study, using homemade clay, play dough and wood. With their parents, they create a collage of family photographs and then dictate a story about their work to the teacher to post with their collages. After listening to stories, they draw their own responses to the literature in journals. The year ends with an exhibit of their artwork.

## STUDENTS

This project was designed for early childhood-aged children (Pre-k through third grade), but can be adapted to any age group with very few alterations except for age-appropriate literature and vocabulary. With older children, art projects are best done in smaller groups.

## STAFF

Stephanie Lee-Harris, Ph.D., is a National Board Certified Teacher who has taught for 30 years. She has won several of The Education Fund's Citibank Success Fund grants, Teacher Mini-Grants, and IMPACT II Adaptor and Developer grants. She has lectured in various states and countries about African-American studies and the fine arts.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Books, art supplies, videos, and music are necessary. The M-DCPS Resource Library offers videos on dance and other related fine art subjects. Using the school media center, the Internet, parents, the art and music teacher, and guest speakers are all excellent examples of enrichment.

## STANDARDS

### The Arts

Music: MU.C.1.1, MU.E.1.1, MU.E.2.1

Dance: DA.C.1.1

Visual Arts: VA.C.1.1

### Language

Literature: LA.E.2.1

*Exposing students to positive role models as well as encouraging family-involved activities, promotes curiosity about the subject matter, which in turn leads to an authentic interest and newfound respect for African-American culture.*

### Stephanie Lee-Harris, Ph.D.

Golden Glades Elementary  
16520 SW 28 Avenue  
Miami, FL 33054  
Mail Code: 2161  
Telephone: 305-624-9641  
Fax: 305-628-5760  
e-mail: sleeharis@aol.com  
Principal: Theron A. Clark

### Sponsored by:



# Symphony in Space

**I**NCORPORATING MUSIC INTO SUBJECT AREAS SUCH AS SCIENCE ENHANCES LESSONS BY MAKING THEM EXCITING, INTERACTIVE AND MEMORABLE. The planets of the solar system are presented along with their unique qualities, interesting nicknames, myths and legends. The history of space exploration and discussions of future space travel are also included in the lessons.

As part of the study, the class listens to “The Planets” by Gustav Holtz and takes note of the instruments that are featured throughout the movement as well as the variances in tempo (speed) and dynamics (loudness). Students take turns serving as conductor of the hand bell or other instrumental group. As group members, they learn the importance of watching the conductor for the appropriate cue to play. Then, when they serve as the conductor, they learn how to direct the instrumentalists to play at certain times and to match the volume and intensity heard on the recording.

The unit culminates with the creation of a live musical performance that features a visual slideshow or PowerPoint presentation displaying photos of the planets. The “Mars” movement from Holtz’s “The Planets” accompanies the students playing their instruments during the slide show.

## STUDENTS

The project was written for a single fourth-grade class, but can also be used with upper elementary levels. The activities appeal to all achievement levels.

## STAFF

Janet Duguay Kirsten is a National Board Certified Teacher who has been teaching for 14 years. She holds a master’s degree from the University of Miami, Frost School of Music, where she is presently a doctoral candidate.



## MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Overhead or LCD projector and screen, books with photos on the solar system and space exploration, a CD of “The Planets” by Gustav Holtz, CD player, class set of hand bells or other instruments are needed. To extend the project to include creative writing and art, students can work on an advertising campaign for a space travel

agency creating a brochure, designing a logo, and storyboarding a TV commercial.

## STANDARDS

### Sunshine State Standards (Fourth Grade)

MU.A.2.2.1, MU.A.2.2.3, MU.B.2.2.2, MU.D.1.2.2, SC.E.1.2.4, SC.E.1.2.5

*Student interest in science soars when engaged in an imaginative cross-curriculum project that combines music, images and active learning.*

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 Principal: Angeles Fleites

**Sponsored by:**



# A Journey Through Seussville



**O** HI! THE PLACES CHILDREN CAN GO AS THEY VENTURE THROUGH SEUSSVILLE AND GET IMMERSSED IN THE WHIMSICAL STORIES OF DR. SEUSS. Students will embark on a journey to unlock the mysteries of reading and writing in our magical world of words. The inspiration behind this project came from Julian, a kindergarten student. Julian was trying to negotiate time to read aloud to the class. After glancing down at his book, “Green Eggs and Ham”, he blurted out, “But teacher, I like reading HERE and THERE! Now I like reading ANYWHERE!

Playing with the meaning and spelling of sounds is natural for young children. Their first sounds and words evolve from playful repetition, gurgling and babbling. This program enables students to build their language by repeating key sounds and words, while ultimately enabling them to associate sounds with their respective graphemes using literature written by Dr. Seuss.

There are no clever tricks for the teaching of sight words. Sight words, by definition, rarely follow any rules or guidelines. Memorization, however, doesn’t have to be boring. Teachers and students should still have fun practicing sight words and their spellings. A Journey Through Seussville provides teachers with time-tested ideas and activities that can be used together with existing lesson plans, as part of the classroom language program.

## STUDENTS

Kindergarten ESOL and non-ESOL students at two different schools participated in this project. This project can be used and adapted by teachers in the primary grades.

## STAFF

Latha Murali and Teresa Acosta have been teaching since 1993. Both are National Board Certified Teachers and are very involved in disseminating information to both new and experienced teachers. They have presented workshops at the national and state level and have received The Education Fund’s Teacher Mini-Grants and Citibank Success Fund grants.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

The Idea Packet provides numerous inexpensive ideas that can be easily incorporated into the curriculum, and can be used both at school and at home. The media center and public libraries are excellent resources to obtain Dr. Seuss books.

## STANDARDS

The student uses the reading process effectively: LA.A.1.1  
The student constructs meaning from a variety of text: LA.A.2.1  
The student uses the writing process effectively: LA.B.1.1  
The student understands the nature of language: LA.D.1.1  
The student understands the power of language: LA.D.2.1  
The student responds critically to fiction, nonfiction, poetry and drama: LA.E.2.1

*A Journey Through Seussville makes learning sight words and their spellings fun with time-tested ideas and activities.*

### Latha Murali

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### Teresa Acosta

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# A Wonderful World of Word Families: Dazzling Daily Lessons

**WHAT ORDER SHOULD I TEACH THE WORD FAMILIES? HOW CAN I FIT THIS INSTRUCTION INTO MY DAILY PLANS? WILL THE WORD FAMILIES HELP MY READERS IN DECODING ... IMPROVE DIBELS SCORES AND COMPREHENSION?**

There is a high frequency list of word families, also known as rimes. More of the sight words end with either -ay or -ill than any other. So, it makes sense to start off with one of those rimes and continue on with this program that gives teachers a daily 20-minute lesson for each of the 51 rimes or word families. These rimes are presented in a systematic, sequential order to build strength in reading each day. This project offers innovative, hands-on practical activities to learn and reinforce the word families. Young readers and struggling older readers will enjoy the fast-paced progress they make through this program.

## STUDENTS

Sixty-two first- and second-grade students participated in word family lessons. They met daily in either small groups or at after-school tutoring. While small group settings are ideal, this program is also designed for whole class instruction in a regular school day. This program is especially beneficial to struggling readers of all ages. Tutors, paraprofessionals and home schooling teachers will also find these user-friendly, systematic scripted lessons a most helpful teaching aid.

## STAFF

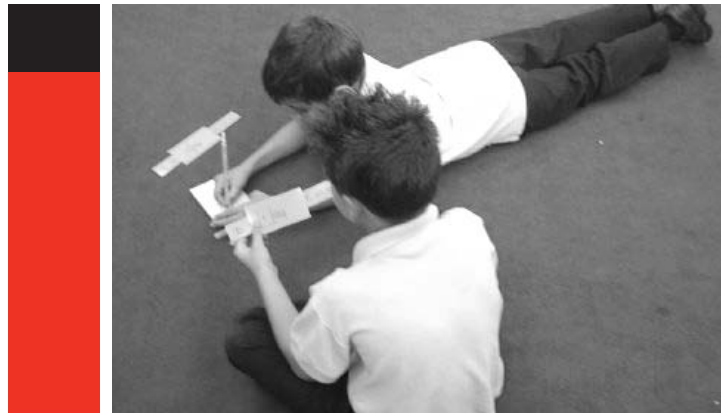
Linda Askari Blanchfield, a reading resource teacher, has been teaching for more than 33 years in grades two through six. She has participated in IMPACT II since 1991 with numerous projects and grants. Her published book, "Why Didn't I Think of That!"

(Creative Teaching Press, 2002) was originally an IMPACT disseminator project in 1993.

Cary Cabrera, a second-grade teacher, is finishing her master's degree at Barry University. Cary is an active member of the Dade Reading Council, a Teacher as Hero winner, and the recipient of the Marguerite Radencich Graduate Scholarship. She is also an active baseball team mom.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Preparation time is necessary, but reasonable. Assessments are informal checklists. Materials required are card stock, permanent markers, and file folders. Blackline master of the projects, Web sites and a list of support resource books available in most school supply stores are included in the Idea Packet.



## STANDARDS

### Language Arts

Student identifies words and constructs meaning from text, illustrations, graphics and charts using the strategies of phonics, word structure and context clues: LA.A.1.1

Student recognizes rhymes, rhythm, and patterned structure in children's text: LA.E.2.1

*By the end of first grade, beginning readers should be connecting known word parts to decode new words. To reinforce this skill, the student benefits from a strong foundation of rimes or word families.*

**Linda Askari Blanchfield  
Cary Cabrera**

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Grants Program**



# Born to Read (and write)

Originally an Assurant Teacher Mini-Grant



**T**HIS PROJECT INVOLVES ONGOING ACTIVITIES THAT STRIVE TO PUT READING FIRST IN A CHILD'S LIFE BY WEAVING READING AND WRITING INTO EVERYDAY

**LIFE BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM.** One meaningful activity occurs on a child's birthday when a parent is invited to read to the class and provide a birthday snack. A list of ways to promote reading is sent home with the child along with a list of age-appropriate gift books. The next day, the class writes thank you notes to the parent for the reading and the birthday child also writes the teacher a thank you note (for a certificate and a book) and shares his or her favorite part of the new book with the class. Students have a new appreciation of books, evidenced by parents' reports of books appearing on children's gift wish lists!

## STUDENTS

This project is appropriate for kindergarten through third grade students.

## STAFF

Kim Ottaviani, an M-DCPS teacher for 20 years, is a National Board Certified Teacher. She graduated from Edinboro University in Pennsylvania and received a master's in technology

from Barry University. She was named 1999 Teacher of the Year at her school and has participated in The Education Fund's Great American Teach-a-Thon and Citibank Success Fund.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

This project requires a variety of books, writing materials, book lists, T-shirts, fabric

crayons, bookmarks, and paper for certificates. A field trip to a park and/or a public library to conduct reading activities, as well as reading Web sites, guest readers and parent volunteers enhance this project.

## STANDARDS

Increases comprehension by re-reading, re-telling and discussion: LA.A.1.1 4

Selects material to read for pleasure: LA.A.2.1 2

Understands connections

between characters and events in literature and people, events and experiences in real life:

LA.E.2.1 1

Writes for a specific occasion, audience and purpose:

LA.B.2.1 2

Uses strategies to support ideas in writing and shows an awareness of topic and audience:

LA.B.1.1 2, LA.C.1.1 2 and

LA.C.1.1 3

*Children learn by example. If parents and teachers "celebrate reading" in a variety of ways, it becomes relevant and fun for students. This project gives teachers easy elements to incorporate into their programs that make reading and writing an everyday celebration.*

### Kim Ottaviani

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Principal: Dr. Robin P. Behrman

### Sponsored by:



# Just Me and Dad: Involving Fathers in Education

Originally a Citibank Success Fund Grant

**R**ESearch indicates that children with involved fathers are less likely to repeat a grade and significantly more likely to have healthy self-esteem and to do well in school. Yet, a National Center for Fathering poll revealed that 40% of dads never read to their children and 52% never walk into their children's school!

This project is designed to increase fathers' involvement in their child's education. Once a month, fathers are invited to participate in activities that incorporate effective reading strategies. During this time, they receive materials and suggestions from a variety of educational specialists that give them practical, effective ways to help their children at home. In one such monthly session, the dads are assigned to do a hobby "show and tell." They then read a book about hobbies ("Froggy's Day with Dad") to their child and together write public-service ads promoting and describing their hobbies.

## STUDENTS

Thirty-five second-grade students with varied levels of achievement took part in this program. This project is especially beneficial to low-performing students in the classroom due to the additional time spent reading and the extra help fathers provide in completing homework assignments. It can be adapted to include all elementary-age students.

## STAFF

Jenifer Soler is a National Board Certified Teacher who has taught for six years. She is a recipient of IMPACT II Adapter grants, a Citibank Success Fund grant, and a Dade Reading Council grant.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Required are books on families (particularly about the father-child relationship), and background reading materials for fathers such as information on the importance of reading to children. Included in the Idea Packet is a list of appropriate titles, a list of barriers – such as absentee fathers and how to

deal with them – and various pre- and post-parent surveys. Guest speakers include media specialists and counselors. Parents and Dade Partners can donate breakfast food and paper for handouts used in the sessions.

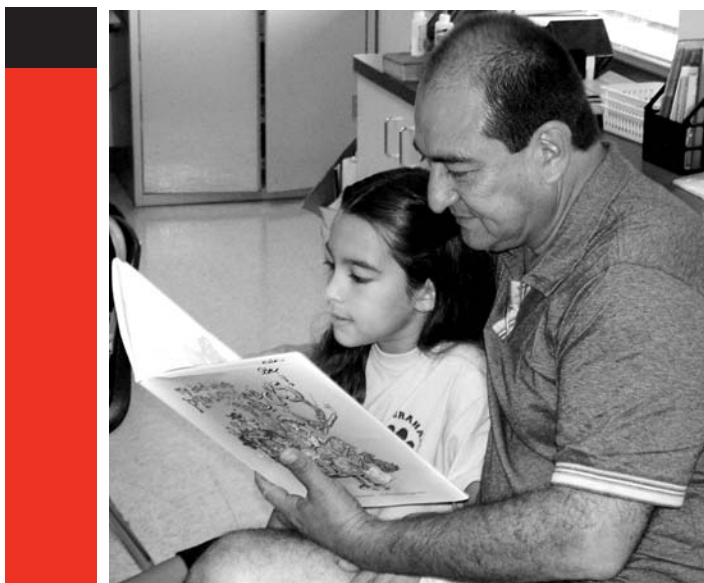
## STANDARDS

### CBC Standards (Second Grade):

- Responds to literature through a variety of activities.
- Listens to daily reading from a wide variety of genres.
- Relates reading to own experiences.
- Increases comprehension by reading, re-telling, and discussing text.
- Reads a variety of materials with fluency and expression.

### Sunshine State Standards

LA.A.1.2.4, LA.C. 1.2.1, LA.D.1.2.2., LA.B.2.2.3



*This program is not only a wonderful opportunity to bring fathers into the classroom for a special time with their child, but also to give them access to practical resources they can use with their children for years to come.*

### Jenifer Soler

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### Sponsored by:

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# PPP's - Paper, Pencil and Pals



**S**UPPORTED BY TALENTED STUDENT MENTORS, LOW-PERFORMING FOURTH-GRADERS LEARN EFFECTIVE WRITING SKILLS IN AN INNOVATIVE PROGRAM THAT TAKES PLACE OUTSIDE OF THE NORMAL CLASSROOM SETTING. Fourth-grade teachers use classroom writing assessments to identify students who need additional writing instruction. Fifth-grade students scoring four or above on the FLORIDA WRITES! the previous year are chosen to mentor the fourth-grade students.

Students meet in the cafeteria once a week for an hour, from October through January. Each weekly lesson uses activities to illustrate a writing concept. For example, in the “quotation marks” lesson, fifth-graders have word phrases pinned to their uniforms. The fourth-graders, wearing quotation marks, create sentences by positioning themselves (without running or speaking) where the quotation marks should be placed.

After every workshop, “PPP” participants enjoy a peculiar treat such as peas and pudding piled on potato chips! These memorable activities have a strong impact on students. Many of the fourth-graders express hope that they will score well enough to be “Pals” in the next school year.

## STUDENTS

Fifty students participated, 40 of which were low-performing. Though the program focuses on preparing fourth-graders for the FCAT writing assessment, it could be adapted to any classroom setting where the writing process is being instructed.

## STAFF

A teacher since 1976, Mary Sisley has received numerous awards. Most recently, she was named a “Great Teacher” by the Great Books Foundation. She was also chosen as a 2005 Teacher Mentor for The Education Fund’s Great American Teach-a-Thon. She is the recipient of several grants and has been a previous IMPACT II disseminator.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

This project requires pocket folders as well as weekly supplies of paper, pencils, paper plates, napkins, plastic utensils and peculiar treats. Assistance may be provided from the school’s writing specialist.

## STANDARDS

### Language Arts

Student uses writing processes effectively: LA.B.1.2.

Student writes to communicate ideas and information effectively: LA.B.2.2

*Each weekly lesson uses fun-filled activities to illustrate a writing concept.*

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**Sponsored by:**  
**Florida Matching  
 Grants Program**



# T-Shirting Literature Stylistically

**STYLE IS WHAT TEENS KNOW. WHAT BETTER WAY TO MOTIVATE TEENAGERS TO READ, INTERPRET AND ANALYZE LITERATURE THAN TO TAP INTO THEIR DESIRE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES STYLISTICALLY?** In this project, students read selected novels and then creatively design t-shirts using the components of reading/comprehension and literature. On the back of their shirts, students must show comprehension of the novel they have read by plotting specifics including the protagonist, antagonist, author's purpose, main idea, setting, rising action, climax, and cause and effect. On the front, they analyze the title and create a drawing that represents it. Students include music and a recorded voiceover to present their report in a style show format.

## STUDENTS

Approximately 200 ninth and 10th grade students, ages 14–16, participated in this project. It can be implemented in middle and senior high school. Students complete the project in one month during one class period per week. Any additional work is done as home learning assignments.

## STAFF

Lena McArthur has been involved in education, in the community and in the classroom, for more than 10 years. She currently teaches creative writing and honors/pre-A.P. English. She received *The Miami Herald's* Teacher Recognition Award for class of the month in 2004 and has been recognized for her students' achievements in writing.

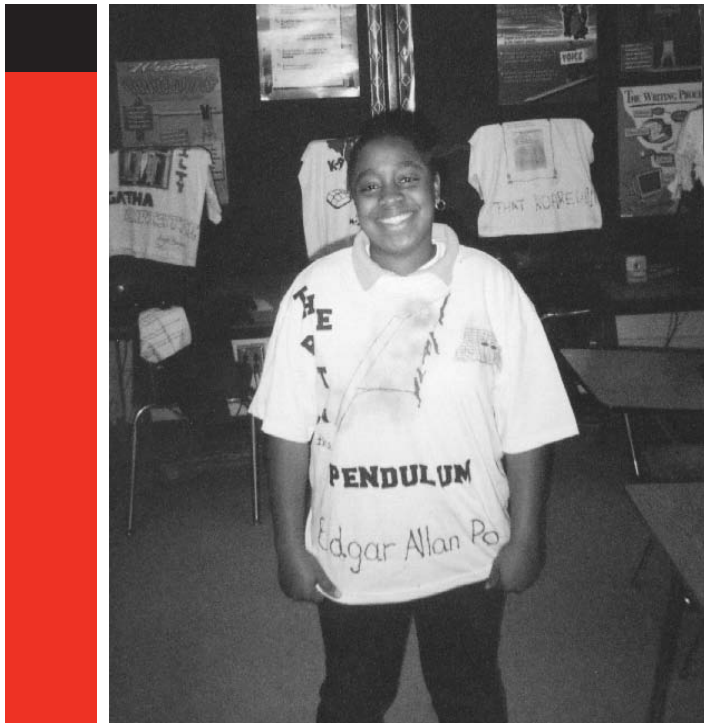
## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

T-shirts may be purchased by students or the teacher. Other items include: selected text, (Adapted textbook: Glencoe Literature) stencils, markers, fabric paint, glitter, ribbon, iron-on transfers and fabric glue. Students may use other items to lend style and creativity to their projects. Resources include the school's media center and computers for typing and downloading photos.

## STANDARDS

### Language Arts

Reading: LA.A.1.4.1, LA.A.1.4.2, LA.A.2.4.1, LA.A.2.4.2, LA.A.2.4.3  
 Language: LA.D.1.4.1, LA.D.2.4.1  
 Literature: LA.E.1.4.1, LA.E.1.4.3, LA.E.1.4.5



*High school students love the chance to work with their hands as well as to express themselves creatively. This tool encourages teens to read and carefully analyze literature.*

### Lena R. McArthur

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 Principal: Gale O. Cunningham

### Sponsored by:

**The William J. and  
 Tina Rosenberg  
 Foundation**

# Block Talk

Originally a Catherine Scripps Rodriguez Family Foundation Teacher Mini-Grant



**F**ROM STANDING IN LINE (ORDINAL NUMBERS) TO BUYING LUNCH (COUNTING MONEY), STUDENTS ARE CONTINUALLY THINKING MATHEMATICALLY AND USING LANGUAGE TO CONVEY THOSE THOUGHTS.

Block Talk maximizes a child's use of everyday words to bridge the mathematical concept they are trying to express.

Teachers will be amazed to see how rich their students' mathematical thinking is while engaged in block play, and will feel empowered by the opportunity to teach math in context, rather than in an isolated, formal manner. Students use number sense concepts while playing, including additive and subtractive words ("take it out," "me too," "give me some," "we need more," and the like). Students also use one-to-one correspondence ("This one is going to play with this one") and fractions ("This is broken into two").

Through play and application, students learn that math is an intrinsic part of everyday life. This project helps the student mediate everyday speech to the formal mathematical concept. Block Talk gives teachers a lens to capture these moments.

## STUDENTS

This project has been applied in a second-grade classroom, but can be adapted to fit students of all achievement levels in any primary grade classroom.

## STAFF

Raquel Diaz has been an M-DCPS teacher for 16 years. She is a National Board Certified Teacher in early childhood and is a doctoral candidate in curriculum and instruction at Florida International University. Her honors include being named "Teacher of the Year" at her school and being listed in "Who's Who Among American Teachers."

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

This project requires blocks and a block play area. No additional resources are required, but it is beneficial to videotape students during block play to analyze their use of everyday words.

## STANDARDS

### Mathematics

Relating objects and numbers to real-life situations:

MA.A1.1.3

Measuring and problem solving in real-world situations:

MA.B.3.1.1

Uses objects to perform spatial tasks: MA.C.2.1.2

Creating patterns using objects: MA.D.1.1.2

*Through play, application and conversation, students learn that math is all around them.*

### Raquel Diaz

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Principal: Sara Martin

### Sponsored by:

**William L. Culbert, Jr.  
Trust**

# Check It Out! We are Learning as We Behave!

Originally a Citibank Success Fund Grant

**T**HIS INTERDISCIPLINARY UNIT FOCUSES ON MATHEMATICAL CONCEPTS FOUND IN THE EVERYDAY WORLD. This project is unique because it teaches the students the value of money as they practice good manners and productive classroom behavior. The students earn money for good behavior and classroom activities, balance their checkbooks, and spend money at the classroom store. They also use coupons in order to learn about sales and percentages.

## STUDENTS

Fourth-grade students in a full-time bilingual gifted program participated. This system was used with these students in all curriculum areas and with all of their teachers.

## STAFF

Marlene Figueroa is a National Board Certified Teacher since 1999 who has been teaching for 14 years in the gifted program. Her degree is in elementary education with an early childhood and gifted endorsement.

She is presently working on her masters in reading education at Florida International University. She has received grants from The Education Fund and has written grant proposals for the Dade Reading Council and Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

## MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Checks (created and copied), balance books/registers (obtained from a bank), supplies for the classroom store

(donated by PTA, parents, grants) and tickets used for “math money” are needed for this project. The Idea Packet contains sample checks and instructions on building a cardboard bank/ATM, money concept activities and lesson plans. A field trip to a local bank and/or bank personnel visiting the school enhances the project. An extension of the project is a business fair that allows students to present their business plans to the community.

## STANDARDS

### Mathematics

MA.A 1.2.1, MA.A 1.2.3, MA.A 2.2.1, MA.A.2.2.2, MA.A.3.2.1

### Language Arts

LA.E 1.2.1

### Social Studies

SS.A.5.2.5  
SS.A.5.2.7



*Check it Out! connects math to the students' world alleviating math anxiety while increasing student achievement and attendance.*

### Marlene Figueroa

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Principal: Dr. Pablo G. Ortiz

### Sponsored by:

**William L. Culbert, Jr.  
Trust**

# Join Me for M.A.T.H. – Mathematics Activities Together Help

Originally a Citibank Success Fund Grant



**S**TUDENTS AND PARENTS GAIN AN APPRECIATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF MATHEMATICS WHEN THEY MAKE A CONNECTION BETWEEN MATH AND REAL-LIFE

**ACTIVITIES.** This project is geared towards struggling fifth-grade math students who scored a level one on the FCAT the previous year. It provides parents an opportunity to learn alongside their child, enabling them to better assist their child with home learning.

Students and parents attend monthly, one-hour, after-school meetings in which they explore and investigate real-life situations such as designing additional classroom space or creating a household budget. Using mathematics, the students work collaboratively with their parents and with each other to seek answers and pose further questions for investigation.

Overall parent participation, such as checking home-learning and filling out a daily planner, has increased substantially as a result of the program. It has also resulted in an overall increase in student test scores of about one letter grade. As revealed through surveys, students also developed a more positive attitude towards mathematics.

## STUDENTS

Low-performing students who scored at level one on the FCAT participated in the project. It can be adapted easily to other ages of mixed ability.

## STAFF

Isis Silva has taught fifth grade for six years and has received several grants from The Education Fund.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

This project requires an overhead projector, base ten blocks, colored tiles, measuring tapes, fraction strips, multiplication bingo, two color counters, dice, calculators, newspapers and Internet access. Parents are a valuable resource, contributing insight and materials.

## STANDARDS

### Mathematics

Number Sense, Concepts and Operations: MA.A.1.2.3, MA.A.3.2.3

Measurement: MA.B.1.2.1

Geometry and Spatial Sense: MA.C.2.2.1, MA.C.3.2.1

Algebraic Thinking: MA.D.1.2.1

Data Analysis and Probability: MA.E.1.2.1, MA.E.3.2.2

*The project's greatest value lies in opening and maintaining lines of communication between parents, teachers and students.*

### Isis Silva

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Principal: John Messersmith

**Sponsored by:**  
**Florida Matching  
Grants Program**





# Project Math!

Originally a Citibank Success Fund Grant

**M**ANY TEENS HAVE A STRONG AVERSION TO MATH. They struggle to make sense of geometry and the abstract symbols of algebra. Because students learn in lots of different ways, it is helpful to represent mathematical concepts in multiple forms. This collection of meaningful, relevant activities invigorates mathematics class and motivates students.

In “Super Summaries” students create posters, PowerPoint presentations, flashcards, puzzles and pop-up story books to help fellow students review their lessons. “Mathematical Math-sterpieces” integrates ideas found in measurement and geometry strands to art. Students work in groups to select a famous work of art - 2 or 3-D - and then re-create the work as closely as possible using pure geometric shapes calculating area and perimeters of paintings or volumes and surface areas of sculptures. “Geometry Photo Shoot” teams are given a list of geometric properties (dilations, symmetry, rotations, and parallel lines) and three to five geometric proofs. They then find real-life examples that match the illustrated proofs such as two parallel lines with a transversal being matched in the real world with a roof of a building with the same angles. In “You’re a Teacher,” students create a short video that teaches a math concept such as “slope” using the stairs or ramps in the neighborhood and incorporating at least three word problems of their topic. An Academy Awards ceremony is staged to honor the best videos.

## STAFF

Maria Montero is a fifth-year teacher originally from Vancouver, Canada. She came to Miami three years ago as a Visiting International Faculty Program Teacher and is currently the mathematics department chair for Mater Academy Charter Middle/High School.

## MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

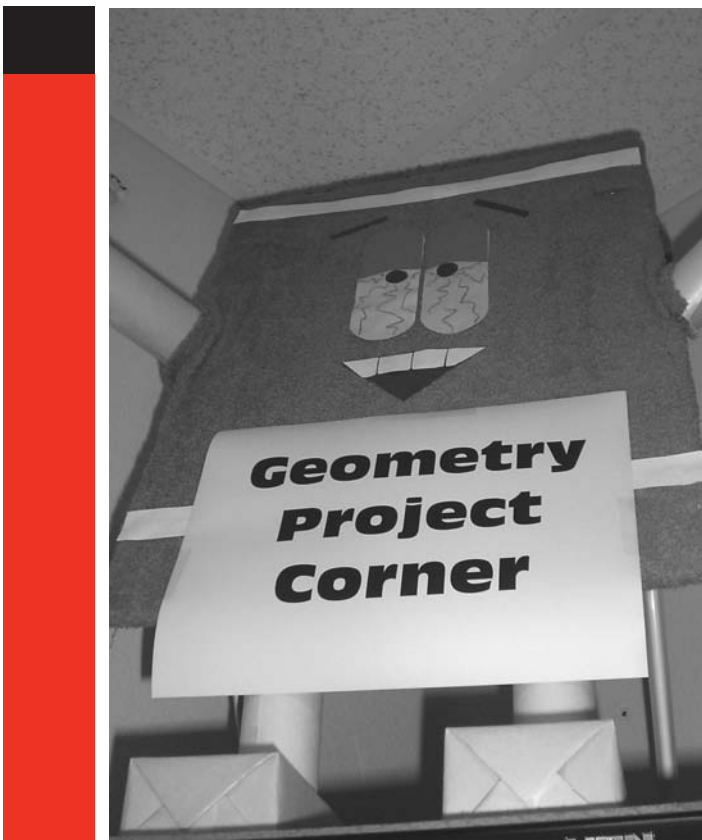
Video camera, digital camera, art supplies and poster board are used.

## STANDARDS

MA.B.3.4.1, MA.B.1.4.1, MA.B.1.4.1, MA.B.1.4.3, MA.C.3.4.3, MA.C.2.4.1, MA.C.3.4.2

## STUDENTS

Ninth-and tenth-grade geometry students in regular and honors classes participated.



*This project poses real-life problems that develop students’ ability to reason and solve problems.*

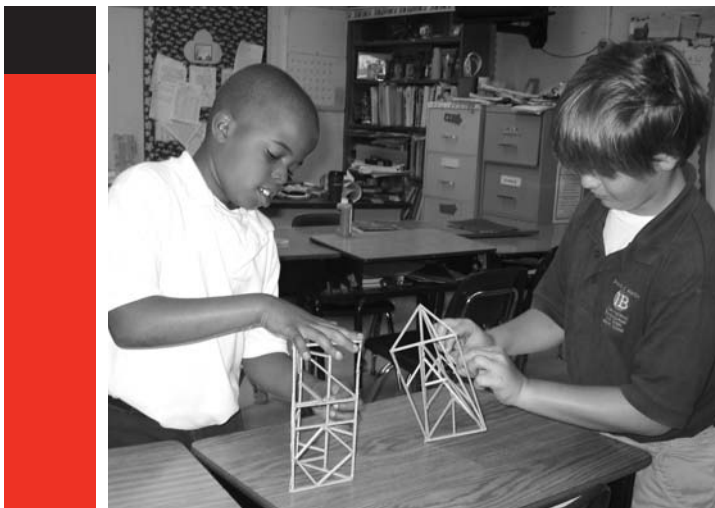
*Challenging problems that reflect students’ interests make math learning more valuable to students.*

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 Principal: Judith Marty

**Sponsored by:**  
**William L. Culbert, Jr.**  
**Trust**

# G.E.E.K.S. - Goal-Oriented, Energy Efficient Kids for Society

Originally an Assurant Teacher Mini-Grant



**T**HROUGH THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH, STUDENTS DEVELOP THEIR OWN ENERGY-EFFICIENCY PROGRAM AND LEARN THE COSTS, BENEFITS, AND SACRIFICES OF SAVING ENERGY IN THEIR HOME AND COMMUNITY. Students are introduced to energy conservation through Web sites and simulations as they journey on an Internet field trip. Upon completion of the field trip, they become energy detectives studying utility bills and conducting investigations in the school and home. The investigators use the dollar bill test (pulling a dollar bill from a closed refrigerator door) or check the wattage of light bulbs and compare costs of energy-efficient lighting with standard. To help solve their energy dilemma, an electrician gives demonstrations and advice. Designing a realistic proposal for their parents, students feel empowered that they can truly help their family save money.

Throughout the project, students become aware of the role energy plays in the economy. Students also investigate the field where they consume the most energy - technology. They learn energy consumption is soaring due to the growth of big data centers (the equivalent of powering a city of 40,000) needed to meet customers' use of new services - such as online video. Electricity is now such a closely-watched expense that big tech firms see it as a major factor when considering rolling out new services. Working on issues like these, the G.E.E.K.S will be the ones society looks up to for answers in the future.

## STUDENTS

This project is suitable for both classroom and school-wide use. It can encompass grades three through ninth. The curriculum can be accelerated in order to benefit older students or simplified according to classroom-based objectives. This unit incorporates writing, math (both application and computation), science and language arts.

## STAFF

Minerva (Mickey) Santerre has been teaching for 25 years and is a National Board Certified Teacher in middle childhood generalist. She holds a specialist degree in science education and is completing work on her Ph.D. She serves on the National Science Teachers Association's Special

Education Advisory Board. She is a multiple recipient of both The Education Fund's Adapter and Disseminator grants.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

This project uses the 3-D Home Kit by MindWare, the Home Quick Planner, and the Young Architect kit. It also uses the "Building Buddies," "Monitoring & Mentoring" and "Learning & Conserving" energy management kits produced by the National Energy Education and Development Project.

## STANDARDS

### Science

Energy: SC.B.1.2., SC.B.2.2.  
The Nature of Science: SC.H.1.2

### Mathematics

Measurement: MA.B.1.2.

*Students get plugged into energy conservation and light-up when they have the chance to use their newfound knowledge to become energy detectives and conduct investigations that help determine where and why they are losing energy in their home.*

### Minerva Santerre

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msanterre@dadeschools.net  
Principal: Pamela F. Brown

**Sponsored by:**  
**Original Impressions**

# I Can Do This!

Originally a Wollowick Family Foundation Teacher Mini-Grant

**T**HIS COLLECTION OF 30, EASY-TO-IMPLEMENT, INTERACTIVE SCIENCE EXPERIMENTS PROVIDES STUDENTS AND TEACHERS WITH ACTIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES. **I CAN DO THIS!** shares ideas and strategies for making science instruction effective, meaningful, and exciting with most of the needed supplies found in the classroom or home, or purchased at a nominal cost. Students learn how to investigate, organize and analyze the experiment at hand. Problem-solving techniques and critical thinking skills are applied using various scientific processes. In one of the activities, similar to David Letterman's Will it Float segment, students determine which objects will float by finding out if the material the objects are made of need to be more or less dense than the water in order to float. Then, they try to determine what they can change to turn a "sinker" into a "floaters."

## STUDENTS

All intermediate elementary students benefit, but it is especially effective with low-performing students to prepare them for the fifth-grade FCAT science test.

## STAFF

Beth Reis and Carole Slonin are both gifted facilitators having taught for 31 years. They have created many interdisciplinary units and assisted on many grant writing teams. Ms. Reis

was a Teacher of the Year region semi-finalist in 1990, and a Retrofit Grant recipient. Both teachers have received numerous grants from The Education Fund including IMPACT II, Teacher Mini-Grants and Citibank Success Fund.

## MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Materials used are inexpensive, common objects found in the home or classroom. Each student uses a journal to record their reaction to each experiment.

## STANDARDS

Understands that all matter has observable, measurable properties: SC.A.1.2

Uses scientific processes and habits of mind to solve problems: SC.H.1.2

Understands that science, technology and society are interwoven and interdependent: SC.H.3.2



*Build positive attitudes towards science and develop scientific literacy while instilling the joy of discovery into your students.*

**Beth Reis  
Carole Slonin**

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Principal: Dr. Robin P. Behrman

**Sponsored by:  
William L. Culbert, Jr.  
Trust**

# Mastering FCAT Science Content through Games



## PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TEST (FCAT) IN SCIENCE CAN BE AN OVERWHELMING TASK.

Upon reviewing the materials that are available to prepare students, teachers quickly realize that there is too much information involving multiple areas (i.e. physics, earth space, chemistry) to cover within the construct of a single tenth-grade course. Trying to review multiple science disciplines along with covering the Sunshine State Standards is often just not feasible.

After reviewing a series of practice FCAT science tests, it is evident that the key to answering many of the multiple choice questions is understanding the language used in the questions. It becomes apparent that vocabulary is a key factor. If students can master the terminology, they are more likely to analyze questions and formulate correct responses. But for many students, the mere mention of the word FCAT has negative connotations, making them balk at drilling for the FCAT. Using games to teach and reinforce content is an engaging activity for both the teacher and the students. So, the 204 vocabulary words, identified by the state as key to the science FCAT in fifth, eighth, and tenth grades were incorporated into a variety of classroom games.

## STUDENTS

Although used with high-school students, it can be adapted to any age level by using age-appropriate vocabulary words. It is especially effective with low-performing students in preparing for the FCAT.

## STAFF

Donna Nunn began teaching in 1975 at Miami Central Senior High. She taught biology, health, anatomy, physiology, environmental science and coached varsity basketball and JV volleyball. In 1993, Ms. Nunn helped open William H. Turner Technical Arts High School and in 2000 began teaching biology at Dr. Michael M. Krop

Senior High. She graduated from Auburn University and has a master's of science from Nova University.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Using ideas from the Teacher Discovery Science Catalog, the M-DCPS Division of Mathematics and Science Education Web site and fellow classroom teachers, the games were assembled, tried and refined.

## STANDARDS

Learning all of the 204 vocabulary words, which the state identifies as key for the Science FCAT, covers all of the Sunshine State Standards in science.

*Through games, teachers can meet the challenge of incorporating FCAT science content into classroom instruction that is both meaningful and enjoyable.*

### Donna Nunn

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Principal: Matthew J. Welker

**Sponsored by:**  
**Florida Matching  
Grants Program**



# You and Me...Under the Sea

**T**HE AMAZING WORLD OF THE OCEAN IS SO CLOSE AT HAND IN SOUTH FLORIDA, YET IT IS UNDERUTILIZED AS A LEARNING TOOL. In this project, an ocean adventure is used as a backdrop to learning across the curriculum. Books and stories about the sea are read. Math is studied counting and sorting with seashells and adding/subtracting magnetic fish using fishing poles. For science, emphasis is on how to maintain healthy oceans and conserve billfish (marlin, sailfish, spearfish and swordfish), which are studied for their important role as apex predators in the oceanic ecosystem. The principals of responsible fishing are also taught including catch and release sport fishing using circle hooks. In social studies, human communities are compared to sea life communities. The beauty, power and movement of billfish and other ocean creatures are also incorporated into art, music and P.E. classes. The classroom and hallways become virtual showplaces of what the sea offers for You and Me...come and see...Under the Sea!

## STUDENTS

A class of kindergarten students took part, but this project can accommodate a whole school population.

## STAFF

In 2001, Margie Love was Region II finalist for Teacher of the Year. She is a dedicated kindergarten teacher who has worked for M-DCPS for 32 years. She also does extensive school committee work as well as volunteers and raises money for community charities. She establishes partnerships with each child's family that maximizes the potential of her students. As a grant recipient of The Education Fund's Citibank Success Fund, she enriches her lessons with treasures from the sea.

## MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Seashells, seahorses, starfish, fish and turtle replicas or specimens, art supplies, living sea posters, magnetic fishing game, ocean-life classifying cards, Rock & Learn Oceans audio program and the DVD, "Billfish: A Challenge for Survival" are needed for this project. These and many more items, as well as detailed holiday lessons with an ocean theme, are included in the Idea Packet. MARS - Marine Animal Rescue Society education coordinator, Donna Clements (786-222-8673), gives free presentations to school groups. The Billfish Foundation Web site, [www.billfish.org](http://www.billfish.org) is useful for more information and links to other sites.



## STANDARDS

Language arts: LA.A.2.1.4, LA.A.2.1.5, LA.D.2.1.4, LA.C.1.1.3

Math: MA.D.1.1.1

Social Studies: SS.B.2.1.4

Science: SC.D.1.1.2, SC.G.2.1.2

*In this year-round interdisciplinary study, students learn that the ocean in their backyard holds a vast array of treasures which need to be handled with care in order to sustain the ocean environment.*

### Margie Love

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Principal: Bernard L. Osborn

### Sponsored by:

**Yamaha Contender  
Miami Billfish  
Tournament**

# You Live – You Learn – You Read

Originally a Citibank Success Fund Grant



**L**ITERACY TUTORING AND SERVICE-LEARNING ARE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES THAT STIMULATE THE HEART AS WELL AS THE HEAD. Literacy tutoring has deep social learning theory roots that emphasize collaborative learning (Vygotsky). Service-learning also has strong civic responsibility based in experiential education theory (Dewey). In both cross-age and peer literacy tutoring, the student tutors expressed excitement in helping another child read and gained insight into the issue of literacy as an authentic and relevant community problem. Another benefit is that students who are reluctant or resistant readers with negative attitudes toward reading are supported by peer role-models that can positively affect their interest in reading.

In this project, participants meet in 45-minute reading/tutoring sessions twice a week for 20 weeks. The tutoring method uses a reciprocal teaching strategy (questioning, predicting, clarifying, summarizing) which students practice before a project begins. The mentors were also instructed on how to keep an ongoing reflective service-learning journal of their mentoring experiences.

## STUDENTS

This project involves two age groups. In the peer literacy tutoring component, 12th and 11th grade advanced and regular students mentored/tutored 10th and 9th grade remedial reading students in both regular and ESE classrooms. The cross-age literacy tutoring component involved the older high-school students working with fourth and fifth grade remedial reading students in an adjacent elementary school.

## STAFF

Larry Moss has been teaching for 13 years, the past five years in M-DCPS and previous to that in Quito, Ecuador. He is a doctoral candidate in educational leadership at Florida International University and has been involved with academic service-learning projects since 2002.

## MATERIALS & RESOURCES

Reading material including books, magazines, and newspapers as well as fiction, non-fiction, and poetry hand-outs are needed for this project. Reflective journals (composition books), pens, pencils, and lined/plain paper are also required. An interesting mix of fiction and non-fiction was used including a historical work on the local community

of Overtown (by Dr. Alywn Nicholas), short stories by Tolstoy and African writers and American folk-tales. Field trips to public libraries and higher education institutions such as Florida International University, Miami-Dade College, and the University of Miami can add value to the core project if outside funds are available. A tutor training manual is included in the Idea Packet.

## STANDARDS

Language Arts  
 Reading: LA.A.1.1,2,3;  
 LA.A.2.1,2,3  
 Writing: LA.B.1.1,2,3;  
 LA.B.2.1,2,3  
 Listening/Viewing/Speaking:  
 LA.C.1.1,2,3; LA.C.2.1,2,3  
 Language: LA.D.1.1,2,3;  
 LA.D.2.1,2,3  
 Literature: LA.E.1.1,2,3;  
 LA.E.2.1,2,3

*Add great vitality to high school language arts classes and positively impact attitudes toward reading with a literacy tutoring community service project.*

### Larry Moss

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 ljmass@dadeschools.net  
 Principal: Dr. Rosann Sidener

**Sponsored by:**  
**Florida Matching  
 Grants Program**



# The World in a Bowl of Soup

**T**HROUGHOUT THIS UNIT, STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT DIFFERENT CULTURES THROUGH ETHNIC CULINARY TRADITIONS. The relationship between geographic location and food source is explored. Then students learn the importance of spices upon a world region and how they are connected to certain cultures. Often the basic food is the same in many regions, but the preparation and spices are the distinctions that make various cuisines so unique. Students select recipes, make shopping lists, measure ingredients, cook soup and create their own recipes that are included in the class cookbook.

## STUDENTS

This project is suitable for primary and intermediate grade students who have basic skills in reading, writing and technology. The lessons can be done individually or in collaborative groups.

## STAFF

Miriam Gomez is a media specialist who has been teaching at M-DCPS schools for 13 years. She is a National Board Certified Teacher who holds a master's degree. She is an active participant in Citibank Family Tech program and has received The Education Fund's Disseminator, Adapter, Library Quest and AT&T TeachNet grants.

## MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Students need access to the Internet, word processing programs (Microsoft Works or Clarisworks) and to produce a slideshow presentation, the KidPix software. The book, "Everybody Serves Soup" by Norah Nooley, as well as additional literature and video resources on world cultures, are used.

## STANDARDS

### Social Studies: (K-2)

The student understands the world in spatial terms: SS.B.1.1  
The student understands the interactions of people and the physical environment: SS.B.2.1

### Language Arts: (K-2 )

The student writes to communicate ideas and information effectively: LA.B.2.1

### Technology – National Educational Technology Standards

Students use basic operations and concepts of hardware and software, engaging in ethical behavior while using information, manipulating technology tools to communicate with others, collaborate to problem-solve and select appropriate tools for specific tasks.



*Food connects us all! Learn how ethnic culinary traditions – various kitchen flavors and scents, table traditions and the food markets – are a reflection of our neighborhoods and world communities. This culturally responsive unit strengthens student connectedness with school.*

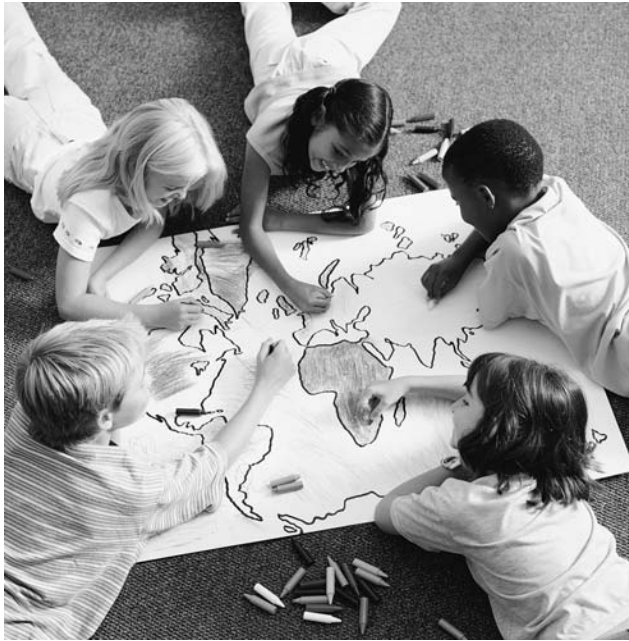
### Miriam Gomez

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Principal: Ann Kinstler

### Sponsored by:



# Kids Creating Cultures!



**T**HIS EXCITING ASSORTMENT OF ACTIVITIES IMMERSSES STUDENTS IN AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF WORLD CULTURES AND HOW THEY DEVELOPED.

After learning what makes cultures unique, students use their research as a springboard to develop their own fictitious society deciding its history, migration, language, demographics, etc.

After this project, global kids emerge who are better equipped to understand the similarities and differences that exist among cultures and people. With this exposure and perspective, students are more apt to think globally, but act locally, score higher on standardized tests, increase attendance, work effectively in groups and become more broadminded and appreciative of diversity.

## STUDENTS

Fifth-grade students in a bilingual gifted program participated in this project. The students are divided into cooperative learning groups of varied abilities that work on the group project during independent discovery center time.

## STAFF

Josefina Novoa-Companiononi has been teaching for 20 years, 16 of which in the gifted program. She is a National Board Certified Teacher since 2000. Her degree is in elementary education with a gifted endorsement and her master's degree is in reading education. She has received The Education Fund's Teacher Mini-Grant and a 2005 IMPACT II Disseminator grant for FUN Units.

## MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Each group uses a folder to hold their semantic maps and

research. Internet, books on world cultures, and art materials are needed. Fieldtrips to the South Florida Historical Museum and the downtown public library are valuable. Community mentors who share their heritage as well as a culminating cultural festival to display the students' creations enhance the project.

## STANDARDS

### Language Arts

LA.A.1.2, LA.A.2.2, LA.B.2.2, LA.D.1.2, LA.E.1.2

### Social Studies

SS.A.1.2.1, SS.A.2.2.3, SS.A.2.2.4, SS.B.1.2.5

### Gifted

2.1-2.5; 4.21, 4.23; 5.1, 5.3

*With this multidisciplinary unit, students embrace the literature and cultures of the world. Using this knowledge base, they develop a fictitious culture and showcase it with a display they design and build.*

### Josefina Novoa-Companiononi

Coral Way K-8 Center

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Principal: Dr. Pablo G. Ortiz

### Sponsored by:





# Holocaust & Tolerance Education

**T**HIS COLLECTION OF RESOURCES AND PAST IMPACT II DISSEMINATOR PROGRAMS ON HOLOCAUST & TOLERANCE EDUCATION PROVIDES A VAST ARRAY OF PROGRAMS TO INCORPORATE INTO THE HOLOCAUST & TOLERANCE EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR MOST GRADE AND ACADEMIC LEVELS. Also included are projects on Jewish heritage. These disseminator programs are a rich resource of timely, effective lessons by highly-qualified teachers. All of the programs are available to adapt to your classroom or school.

- Contact The Education Fund, 305-892-5099, ext. 18, or visit [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org) to request an Idea Packet and contact information on the teacher/disseminator of the project you are interested in.
- Adapter grants (from \$200-\$400) are available for any of the projects listed below. An Adapter application is in the inserts of this Ideas with IMPACT catalog.

## PROJECTS TO ADAPT

### American Jewish Writers: Novelists, Dramatists, and Poets (9-12, English)

Eleanor Cohen

Increases cross-cultural awareness through literature. Students learn about American Jews who contributed to the culture and history of the United States as they research an author, make a visual book report, and watch a film version of the novel.

### The Holocaust Memorial Visit: A Living Lesson in Man's Inhumanity to Man (6-12, social studies)

Dr. Miriam Klein Kassenoff

This unit study uses the Holocaust Memorial as its focal point.

### Holocaust Survivors' Quilt Project (2-12, social studies, language and visual arts)

Lisa Boswell-Garrison

Students interview Holocaust survivors and make a quilt square that represents each survivor's life.

### Anne Frank: The Story (6-10, social studies, language arts)

Ilana Ascher-Alamo

Research and writing skills are

taught as students keep journals throughout their study of "Anne Frank," the play.

### Courage to Care Quilt Project (2-12, social studies)

Dr. Anita Meinbach

A study of the Holocaust with its courageous victims, rescuers and resistance fighters is a precursor to the quilt project. Students then study people from other eras who had the vision and courage to make positive changes in the world.

### Never Forget (1-2, social studies, language arts)

Lizette Kabak Weingard

Lessons and activities based on picture books fulfill the requirements of the State of Florida mandate requiring Holocaust education for primary age.

### Teaching the New Three Rs: Respect, Responsibility and Remembrance (9-12, English, world history, American government)

Jan Hartleben

Series of activities using primary documents and first-hand reports culminate in student presentations to their peers and a Holocaust survivor.

### Teaching Tolerance Through Fairy Tales, (2-4, language arts)

Beth Reis and Carole Slonin

Using familiar stories makes it easier for students to visualize good and evil through another's eyes. They then write sequels that change the intolerant or abject behavior of the antagonist.

### Making News Happen (8-12, English, social studies)

Tom Calvey

After an in-depth study of the Holocaust, students work as a newspaper staff and write and edit accounts of events and editorials.

### The Holocaust Remembered: A Multi-Media Showcase and Contest (6-12, interdisciplinary)

Deedee Toner

Lessons from the Holocaust are applied to original projects in a variety of mediums. A showcase, contest and a series of guest lectures, including Holocaust survivors and Allied liberators educate the school and community on the Holocaust.

### Entombed, a Holocaust Remembrance (9-12, English)

Deedee Toner

Coupling the written word, "Entombed" by Bernard Mayer, a local author, with an audio recording (provided by disseminator) is a powerful and effective teaching tool. Jewish life and survival tactics during World War II are told with a first-person account.

## RESOURCES

### The Holocaust Memorial

1933-1945 Meridian Avenue

Miami Beach, FL 33139

305-538-1663

[www.holocaustmmb.org](http://www.holocaustmmb.org)

A large environmental sculpture with a series of outdoor spaces designed to lead the visitor through a procession of visual, historical and emotional experiences. It provides cultural and educational programs for the community including field trips for students.

### Holocaust Documentation & Education Center & Museum

(Museum to open in 2007)

[www.hdec.org](http://www.hdec.org)

954-929-5690

Rositta Kenigsberg

[info@hdec.org](mailto:info@hdec.org)

Provides the following for educators:

- State of Florida Resource Manual on Holocaust Education (3-12)
- Teachers' Institute on Holocaust Studies
- Student Awareness Days
- Speakers Bureau
- Writing and Visual Arts Contest

### Dr. Miriam Klein Kassenoff

Holocaust Education

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

1500 Biscayne Blvd.,

Miami, FL 33132

305-995-1201

Provides information and workshops on Holocaust education

Authored with Anita Meinbach:

"Memories of the Night: A Guide to the Holocaust"

### USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education

[www.usc.edu/schools/college/vhi](http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/vhi)

213-740-6001

- An archive of 40,000 online visual history testimonies of Holocaust survivors
- Echoes & Reflections: A multi-media curriculum for high-school students is available at [www.echoesandreflections.org](http://www.echoesandreflections.org)



## Sponsored by:

### Robert Russell Memorial Foundation

The Robert Russell Memorial Foundation was created by Bob Russell, a long-time Miami leader. It was activated at the time of his death in December 1983. It funds programs for youth in Miami and supports many programs benefiting the Jewish communities in Miami, the nation and in Israel.



# Teachers Network Leadership Institute (TNLI)

## An Action Research Program of The Education Fund

### About TNLI

The Teachers Network Leadership Institute (TNLI) is an action research initiative of more than 125 MetLife Fellows from 14 nationwide affiliates that connects education policy with actual classroom practice to improve student achievement. The mechanism ensures that education policy-making is informed by the realities of schools and classrooms.

TNLI empowers teachers by training them to utilize ongoing research to improve instruction and influence education policy decisions. Action research is a process teachers can use to analyze the effectiveness of their instruction through data collection, evaluation and reflection. Full-time classroom teachers research issues that affect their students and develop recommendations, document their work in papers and publications, and disseminate their work locally and nationally. To get the word out, teachers give presentations to school districts, school boards, national conferences and join influential task forces and advisory boards.

The Education Fund works with the National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) of Miami and Dr. Jill Farrell, director, Ph.D. and Ed.S. curriculum and instruction programs at Barry University, who is the university advisor to the program.

The program includes monthly meetings with intensive training in conducting action research, readings and discussions on teaching strategies and practices as well as education policy discussions.

### Topics Researched

#### In the 2004-05 Catalog:

The 2004-2005 *Ideas with IMPACT* catalog included seven NBCT teachers' action research. Their research topics included:

- Service learning
- Habits of mind
- Teaching social studies through art
- Minorities and science
- Critical thinking in mathematics
- Training teachers in hands-on science
- Learning communities

#### In the 2005-06 Catalog:

During 2004-2005, the program expanded to also include teachers who were not National Board Certified as well. Eight MetLife Fellows conducted action research which appeared in the 2005-06 *Ideas with IMPACT*. Their research included:

- Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)
- Web-based tutorials
- Nurturing interventions with at-risk students
- Use of current events to develop critical thinking
- Looping ESE students
- Research process and reading comprehension
- A collaborative teaching project to improve student observation and interpersonal skills

### Request Information

Their research papers, along with contact information, are posted on The Education Fund's Web site: [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org). In addition, MetLife Fellows' research from around the nation can be found at [www.teachersnetwork.org](http://www.teachersnetwork.org).

### Apply

If you would like to explore conducting research in your classroom – and receive a \$750 grant, TEC and/or graduate credits to do so – please see the application in the inserts of this catalog or contact The Education Fund at 305-892-5099, ext. 18.

On the following pages is the body of work that was conducted during the 2005-2006 school year including research on: culture-infused homework, discovery learning and mathematics, forensics in science curriculum, and reflection strategies in professional development.



### **WILL INCORPORATING STUDENTS' CULTURE INTO THE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS IN SIXTH GRADE IMPROVE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT, RESULTING IN AN INCREASE OF STUDENTS' COMPLETED HOMEWORK, AND ULTIMATELY IMPACTING THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT?**

#### **Problem/Rationale**

One of the most important goals of any educator, (and certainly one of the goals of this action research project), was to increase academic achievement. There is no doubt that parental involvement plays a key role in the students' academic success. The 970 students of Oak Grove Elementary Community School live in a large, urban multicultural community. The students in this project are sixth graders: 75% Haitian, 16% African-American, 9% Hispanic and 0% Caucasian. The most difficult challenge I have faced is increasing parental involvement and getting students' homework completed and turned in on time.

My rationale for this action research was based on critical needs to understand the Haitian culture and the other cultures of the community and find a way to peak the interest of the students and their families to increase parental involvement and students' academic performance. In my action research during a four-week period, I infused culture into students' homework whereby

they had to interact with family and community members to complete their assignments.

#### **Research**

According to Harris Cooper, Ph.D., James J. Lindsay, Ph.D., and Scott Greathouse, Ph.D., of the University of Missouri-Columbia and psychologist Barbara Nye, Ph.D., of Tennessee State University, the students in grades six through twelve that complete more homework will do better in school than the students that do not complete homework. The research indicates that the attitude of parents towards homework also plays a key role in the educational process of their child (1998).

According to the action research of Francine Johnson of Chicago public schools, there are teachers that do not understand the complexity, diversity and social issues that can influence the development and progress of the student. Johnson explains that every teacher needs to understand the students' families and the role they play in the student's educational process (2006).

#### **Data/Tools**

A multitude of data sources were used for this action research project. A parent and student survey was given at beginning and at the end of the project. These surveys were compared to see if parent involvement improved. I compared the amount of homework assignments turned in during the first four weeks to the amount of homework turned in during the following four weeks, after culture was incorporated into the assignments. In order to see if students' academic achievement improved, I recorded each student's grade for each subject before the infusion of culture as well as the student's grade for each subject after the infusion of culture. These grades were totaled, averaged, and compared with each other to see if there was a gain in academic achievement.

#### **Analysis**

All the results of this project indicated that parent involvement significantly increased students' academic achievement and increased homework assignments turned in. There was a clear increase in parental involvement with homework once the homework assignments incorporated the students' culture. There was a significant gain in the amount of homework turned in and there was a significant gain with regards to academic achievement in all subjects after the infusion of culture. Both the parents and students indicated that they enjoyed the assignments that related to their family's culture.

We as teachers need to be culturally sensitive to the students in our classroom. Cultivating a caring community by incorporating the culture of our students into the lessons and homework assignments will peak the interest of the students in the class. Breaching the cultural barriers will motivate both parent and student to participate in the educational process.

#### **Policy Recommendations**

This project recommends that the state develop curriculum that incorporates the cultures of the community. Support from school districts, state and local governments should be given to train and prepare teachers in obtaining family involvement and support. There is a need to develop and implement programs that incorporate and cultivate a culturally sensitive approach to education and integrate parental involvement into the education process. All educators should make an effort to improve student and parent attitudes towards homework and provide parental involvement training to parents in need of assistance.

#### **Contact**

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Principal: Ms. Rhonda McKinney



## HOW WILL TEACHING MATHEMATICS THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL AND DISCOVERY LEARNING IMPACT STUDENT AND TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD MATHEMATICS?

*(The following research has not been completed and will continue in the 2006-2007 school year.)*

### Problem/Rationale

Although research states learners retain only five percent of the information they hear, 10 percent of what they read, and 20 percent of what is presented to them in audio-visual format, traditional mathematics courses are taught using these three formats as the predominant mode of instruction.

This may explain why many students are not excelling in the area of mathematics. According to district results on the 2005 Florida Comprehension Test (FCAT), 41 percent of the students in the district did not demonstrate proficiency in mathematics. Consequently, it is necessary to research effective instructional methods that will increase student knowledge in mathematics.

### Research

As a curriculum support specialist with the district's Beginning Teacher Program, I have the opportunity to help new teachers develop the art of teaching by working with beginning teachers in a variety of school settings. To determine the effectiveness of experiential and discovery learning on student and teacher attitudes, I chose to work with a struggling new teacher in a high-need school. The site selected was a Title I school where a significant percentage of the students did not perform well on the 2005 FCAT.

As a curriculum support specialist, I plan to conduct modeled, hands-on, discovery lessons with selected teachers from the

targeted site once every other week (these classes meet in 110 minute block periods five times within a two-week period). Through these lessons, students will be engaged in high-interest experiences, such as creating pencil cars, developing personal budgets based on career interests/goals, and participating in the "Data Olympics." By engaging in these carefully designed tasks, participating students will demonstrate understanding of mathematical concepts such as number sense, geometry, statistics, probability, and problem solving. The task will also help students collaborate, engage in mathematical discourse and use creative and critical thinking. This personal and engaging approach to imparting the subject matter is expected to increase student interest and participation, which is expected to positively impact student achievement and attitude toward mathematics. In addition, these positive student outcomes are expected to positively impact teacher attitude toward teaching mathematics.

### Data/Tools

Participating students and teachers will engage in pre- and post-attitude surveys and be asked to reflect on each session. Students will also be given pre- and post-activity sheets based on the mathematics inherent in the modeled lessons. Students will engage in a variety of experiences that emphasize specific mathematics concepts and skills in a fun format. Experiential and discovery learning shrouds practice of necessary key concepts, while developing solid foundational skills that are required prerequisites for higher-level mathematics courses.

### Analysis

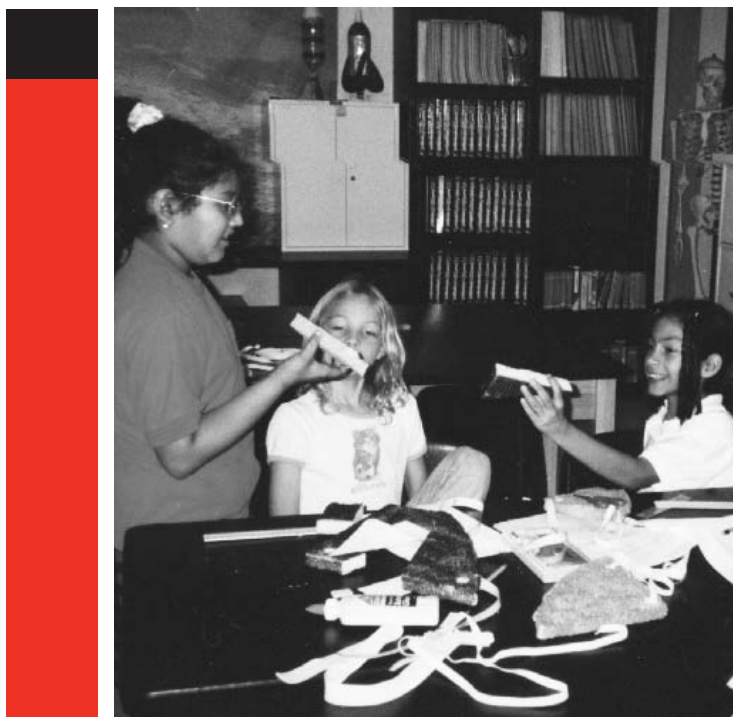
Comparative analysis of pre- and post-attitude surveys and pre- and post-activity sheets are expected to reveal hands-on discovery learning has the potential to increase student interest, attitude and achievement in mathematics. These positive outcomes are expected to positively impact the teacher's attitude toward teaching mathematics and incorporating hands-on, discovery opportunities for their students.

### Policy Recommendations

As a result of this action research, the writer expects to impact the quality and type of support provided to beginning teachers by the district via the Beginning Teacher Program and related professional development. Colleges of education may be challenged to expand their programs to allow more time for studying, developing, planning and implementing hands-on, discovery math lessons for their education majors. Middle and high-school curriculums may expand to include more opportunities for students to learn-by-doing. The summer enrichment and remediation programs may take on this fresh approach to impart skills students could not learn in the traditional format during the regular school year.

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## WILL THE INCLUSION OF FORENSICS WITHIN THE SEVENTH-GRADE GIFTED SCIENCE CURRICULUM ENHANCE THE STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TOWARD SCIENCE AS WELL AS THEIR CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS?

### Problem/Rationale

Students at Riviera Middle School have typically exhibited a lack of motivation toward science as well as difficulties in engaging in the problem solving and critical thinking skills demanded of this subject. Past Science FCAT scores have indicated deficiencies within the scientific-thinking strand of the Sunshine State Standards. These observations may be due in part to the lack of a hands-on, inquiry-based approach to science and the failure to provide enough real-world practical applications within the science curriculum.

In addition to this, advanced science students are faced with the challenge of learning the content of three years of middle school comprehensive science in two years since they take earth and space science as their eighth-grade science course. As a result of this, this group of students typically misses out on several key concepts that have been incorporated into the traditional eighth-grade science curriculum.

As a science instructor, I was looking for ways to provide my students with opportunities to experience some of these key concepts while enhancing their motivation and critical thinking skills at the same time. It was my belief that the infusion of forensics into the science curriculum would be an ideal method for achieving this goal.

Forensic science incorporates key principles of biology, chemistry, and physics. In order to solve crimes, students must be aware of the scientific principles involved. The opportunity to be the first to solve a mystery or to outsmart classmates provides the reinforcement needed to motivate students toward success. The continuous application of the scientific method to real-life crime situations requires students to collect, report, and analyze data and to then draw

conclusions. The problem-solving strategies utilized in this process requires students to think logically and critically. Therefore, as a result of this project, I felt as if students would gain a greater understanding of the entire scientific process in addition to the myriad of concepts and principles involved.

The school in which the research took place is part of a large urban school district located in a pre-dominantly Hispanic community. The student make-up of the school consists of approximately 86 percent Hispanic students; 9 percent White, non-Hispanic students; 2 percent Black, non-Hispanic students; and 2 percent Asian/Indian/Multiracial students. The action research study was implemented in my seventh-grade gifted science class, which consisted of 20 students. For this group, a unit on forensics was incorporated within the fourth grading period.

### Research

Funkhouser and Deslich (2000) concluded that forensics can be the basis of a curriculum that promotes analytical thinking and problem solving. By integrating various sciences to solve a specific problem and engaging in the process of scientific inquiry, teachers may utilize forensics as a means of approaching science from an application point of view that allows for many avenues of exploration which encompass many disciplines. Funkhouser and Deslich were also able to link forensics to greater student motivation and interest levels.

Additionally, Allen, Berkowitz, and Loudon (1995) were successful in finding a positive correlation between forensics and critical thinking. The utilization of multiple perspectives as a problem-solving skill seems to play a significant role in enhancing the analytical reasoning process.

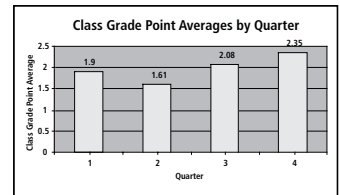
### Data/Tools

The data sources included student work samples, direct observation, and student interviews. Comparisons of student participation and achievement were made between the study of forensics and the study of the other units taught throughout the year. Student motivation was evaluated by examining class participation and frequency of completing assignments. Student achievement was examined by looking at unit test grades and nine-week grades.

### Analysis

Student participation, interest, and achievement peaked during the unit on forensics. This was reflected by direct observation as well as student performance. During the fourth grading period, where there was an emphasis on forensics, students completed 88.6 percent of their assignments, compared to 81.6 percent during the other three quarters. Furthermore, during the same grading period, nine-week class grade point averages rose 26.3 percent as compared to the other three quarters (from 1.86 to 2.35 on a 4.0 point scale). Finally, test scores on forensics exams were 24.1 percent higher than the cumulative scores on all other exams given throughout the year (a 1.80 test average on a 4.0 scale as compared to a 1.45 test average). Since activities and assessments conducted throughout the year incorporated comparable critical thinking requirements, this study supports the hypothesis that the

inclusion of forensics enhances student motivation and analytical reasoning skills.



### Policy Recommendations

The research indicates that hands-on, inquiry-based activities with real-world applications enhance student motivation and achievement within a critical thinking-rich science curriculum. Furthermore, the incorporation of forensics within the seventh-grade advanced middle-school science curriculum not only provides an optimal way of promoting learning gains in analytical reasoning skills, but also provides a unique opportunity to incorporate key concepts and topics that may otherwise be absent. As such, schools should give special consideration to infusing real-world, relevant topics that promote problem solving, such as forensics, into the curriculum.

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## HOW WILL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOCUSED ON REFLECTION AND REFLECTIVE JOURNAL WRITING IMPACT THE BEGINNING TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES?

### Problem/Rationale

What can be done to help the beginning teacher thrive and survive during his or her first year in the elementary classroom? This was my focus as I tried to develop a professional development component that would encourage five beginning teachers at North Glade Elementary to reflect and plan instructions geared toward meeting the needs of every learner in his or her classroom.

This form of reflective practice was planned for the beginning teacher's classroom because it provides the opportunity for the beginning teacher to observe, use past experiences and judgment to make informed decisions about instructional practices. Dewey (1991) likens reflection to a man traveling an unfamiliar road where he has to make a decision. This reflection, he contends, mirrors the decision the teacher takes as he or she reflects and discovers facts about his or her instructional practices that he or she will later use to serve the purpose of improving instruction.

The need for a focus on reflection was identified as I worked as a literacy coach with six beginning teachers. From my observations, I noticed that when these beginning teachers were involved in some form of reflection, such as a post observation to a lesson demonstration, they were better able to identify the specific needs of their struggling readers and identify alternative strategies that they could use to help students progress in reading.

### Research

The importance of reflection in the life of a teacher is often discussed in educational circles. Stephen Brookfield (1995) in "Becoming a Critical Reflective Teacher" states "Simple utilitarianism dictates that critical reflection is an important habit for teachers to develop. Becoming critically reflective increases the probability that we will take informed actions." These informed actions I believe will ultimately benefit our students.

Renewed interest in the role of the reflective practitioner has also been influenced by educational researcher Donald Schon (1983). Schon, defines reflection in terms of how researchers use practical knowledge to conduct "frame experiments" in which past experiences and previous knowledge help to make sense of new and unusual situations or problems in the classroom. Therefore, the reflective practitioner comes to a new understanding based on the process of framing or developing an understanding of an idea or situation, reframing that understanding followed by experimentation and back-talk. Back-talk is important in this process as it provides the opportunity for the reflective practitioner to have a reflective conversation in which implication of the situation that is being reflected on is discussed, understood and an action plan is developed. Through this process, the reflective practitioner is able to construct new knowledge about his or her practice.

### Data / Tools

Four data sources were used in the research process:

- Pre- and post-reflective surveys
- Professional development workshop focused on reflection
- Reflective journaling
- Classroom observations and discussions

A professional development session was used to teach the beginning teachers the important role that reflection plays in students' achievement and how to create and use a reflective journal. Classroom observations were used to compare each teacher's reflective journal entries with anecdotal data collected from classroom observations.

The first reflective practitioner survey was used to identify beginning teachers who were actively involved in reflection, the teachers' favorite instruction delivery method and the teachers' views about reflection. In the second survey, they explained what was gained from being involved in reflective journal writing and how participation in this project impacted their instructional practice and students' learning.

### Analysis

After analyzing the reflective journals, the results were entirely different than what I had expected. First, it enabled me to reflect on my leadership style as a reading coach. The number of completed journals was far below my expectations. In my opinion, this speaks to some extent to the degree in which I did or did not make it clear to the participants my expectations regarding their reflective journals. The participants revealed that the reflective journal writing was a difficult task to complete because they had never been consciously involved in the process of reflection before.

Overall, the results of this research indicate that both the beginning teachers and students benefited from this project as it provided the opportunity for the beginning teacher to closely examine their instructional styles and look at alternative methodologies to meet the needs of every child in their classrooms. The teachers' journals provided evidence that reflective journal writing forced the beginning teachers to systematically plan and teach reading on a daily basis. This produced many sparks of insight that influenced instructional strategies and eventually learning outcomes in the classroom.

### Policy Recommendations

The process of reflection should be taught and emphasized throughout the pre-service years. There should be a greater emphasis placed on needs assessment of the beginning teacher so that appropriate help can be provided at the start of the school year.

Support of the beginning teacher is of utmost importance if they are to develop into reflective practitioners. The reading coach plays a very important role in this area of support and must therefore be an expert in his or her field in order to provide the level of support and mentorship that beginning teachers need.

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