

# 2008-2009 Ideas with **Impact**



FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dig in gardens to grow science skills.  
Discover dollars for your classroom! **LOOK INSIDE!**



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FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

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makes surplus inventory and supplies donated by businesses available free to teachers to use in their Miami-Dade County Public School's classrooms. To receive a pass to shop for free, visit [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org), and click on the "For Educators" button.

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

IMPACT II is a program of The Education Fund that focuses on strengthening curriculum, student achievement and teacher leadership 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.

Teachers who have developed successful classroom teaching ideas are given Disseminator Grants to package and market their proven projects through the *Ideas with IMPACT* catalog, the Idea EXPO & Conference and the Idea Packets which contain curriculum materials such as lesson plans, worksheets and resource lists that help teachers adapt the ideas to their own classrooms. Adapter Grants provide supplies for the project ideas. Curriculum guides for each project and IMPACT II applications can be accessed at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org).



## How IMPACT II Can Work for You

ATTEND the Idea EXPO-The Teacher Conference, Sat. Oct. 11, 2008 at the Miami Beach Convention Center. Register online at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org).

\*Harry Wong, the classroom management guru and the author of *The First Days of School*, will be joined by more than 70 teachers leading hands-on “by teacher, for teacher” workshops for all k-12 teachers in all subject areas.

APPLY for an Adapter grant to purchase materials to adapt one of the ideas featured in this catalog or in past years' catalogs. Contact the teacher who developed the idea for an Idea Packet. Disseminator Grants also available if you have an idea you want to share in the next IMPACT II catalog. Apply on-line at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org).



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*The cover photo by Juan Cabrera is of Eloisa Mena,  
a teacher at Design & Architecture Senior High,  
and her students.*

# Thank You Teachers & Administrators!

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If you designated The Education Fund during the campaign that took place in the fall of 2007 and your name does not appear on this list, please call Corey Yugler at 305-892-5099, ext. 21.

You can designate The Education Fund as the recipient of your payroll deduction donation. Just fill out the contribution card and write in The Education Fund as your donation recipient with the amount you are donating to The Education Fund (please see note below). Then, send an e-mail to [cyugler@educationfund.org](mailto:cyugler@educationfund.org) or call 305-892-5099, ext. 21 to add your name to our donor list.

*Important Note: The donor designation option is a special service of the United Way. The United Way focuses on meeting the health and human services challenges facing our community. Their service is not intended as a way for organizations to have donors redirect their donations away from health and human service needs, but is intended to be an easy way for donors to make an additional gift to another organization of their choice. Thus, if you choose to use the donor designation services of the United Way, you are asked to make your normal gift to United Way and then make a gift to The Education Fund. Of course, you can always support public education through The Education Fund by donating online at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org). Thank you for your support of both the United Way and The Education Fund.*



# Apply NOW

## For The Education Fund's Impact II Adapter Grants

Adapter Grants sponsored by



**I**MPACT II was created to breakdown the isolation inherent in teaching. For more than 18 years, The Education Fund has built a network that connects teachers to one another to share curriculum ideas that have been proven to raise student achievement. Annually, select ideas appear in this publication, the *Ideas with IMPACT* catalog.

IMPACT II Adapter Grants provide funds to teachers to implement these classroom-tested projects throughout Miami-Dade County. Along with the funds, Adapting teachers connect with the originator of the idea to receive valuable insights on implementation. An Idea Packet, a detailed guidebook that includes resource lists and standard-based lesson plans, is created for each idea.

### Here's how to apply:

1. **Select an idea from past or current catalogs or from The Education Fund's Web site at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org).**
2. **Attend the Idea EXPO on Saturday, Oct. 11, 2008 and register for the workshop on that idea (EXPO has 4 workshop sessions plus Harry Wong!)  
or  
Request an Idea Packet and discuss with the Disseminator teacher how to implement the project idea.**
3. **Complete Adapter application online at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org).**



# Teachers **IMPACT** our lives and futures – one-lesson-at-a-time.

We applaud your commitment and dedication to  
bringing excellence to public education.



# 100th Day of School



Celebrating the 100th day of school involves countless activities that show student's learning doesn't always have to happen with an open book or pencil and paper. On the very first day of school, students begin activities that generate excitement for the 100th day celebration. Daily they are reminded of the approaching day as they update a log with calculations involving the 100th day.

Other activities include: measuring a 100 paper clip trail, finding the mass and weight of 100 pennies using various scientific equipment (balance, triple beam scale and electronic scale), categorizing 100 vertebrates according to the four groups, and drawing patterns of 100 circles. Similar activities are set up in rotating stations during the culminating celebration. Math, art, science, social studies and language arts are all part of the lessons leading up to that long anticipated day.

*Need something to celebrate? Why not the 100th day of school? Students, parents and teachers can look forward to this mid-year celebration and learn 100 things in the process!*

## Students

Fifty-one K-5th-grade gifted students participated. It has also been implemented with an entire grade level. This is a flexible, easy-to-use method for a whole school, grade level or a single classroom to celebrate the 100th day of school.

Multi-disciplinary projects incorporating the number 100 create fun and easy-to-implement learning activities that engage students during the countdown to the 100th Day. The program can be designed so that students complete activities daily until the 100th day or on a weekly basis. In addition, a contest can be added in which students create an activity involving the number 100 and the students vote to select the best one.

## Staff

A teacher since 1976, Mary Sisley currently teaches gifted students and has received numerous awards for her teaching ability. She has participated in The Education Fund's Teach-a-Thon and is a recipient of IMPACT II Disseminator and Adapter grants.

Parent involvement is an integral part of the unit from the beginning as they are given a list of 100 fun, simple, learning activities that they need to complete with their child before the 100th day of school.

## Materials & Resources

For project ideas, go to <http://nmiamielem.dade.schools.net/>, click on class projects and scroll down to 5th Graders Celebrate the 100th Day of School. The Idea Packet contains lesson plans and lists of materials and resources.

## Standards

Each of the project's activities incorporates one or more of the Language Arts or Math benchmarks.

## Sponsored by

### Florida Matching Grants Program



### Mary Sisley

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Principal: Debra Dubin



# Around the World with Kites

Originally a Citi Success Fund Grant

**M**ore than crepe paper and Popsicle sticks, kites constructed and tested in this project replicate historical experiments in design and purpose, introducing science and math principles to determine wind velocity, distance, weight and motion. Investigation of kites throughout history and literature draws on invention, language, culture and geography, while construction demands a grounding in geometry, creativity and group interaction.

Students begin by researching kites popular in a specific country, then design, construct and decorate authentic replicas based on the information they've gathered. When the projects are completed, students conduct an extensive mathematic, geometric, and aerodynamic analysis of their contraptions and prepare presentations on the culture and country of its origin. By April, during International Kite Month, they are ready to take to the skies in a vibrant school-wide festival of flight.



*Students will have the world on a string in this project that links history, culture, geometry, physics, art and meteorology through a timeless childhood pastime.*

## Students

This program has been implemented in grades k-6, and is applicable to most primary school students. Students of higher math levels could participate by using more advanced science and math concepts, such as physics, meteorology and geometry.

## Staff

Cassandra Pressley has been teaching for two years at Opa-Locka Elementary which was recently renamed in honor of former School Board member, Dr. Robert Ingram. She currently teaches sixth-grade reading and will be teaching science classes next fall. She is certified in Elementary Education.

Ina McNeil is a retired M-DCPS teacher who has served as a mentor to beginning teachers. She has received several grants from The Education Fund.

## Materials & Resources

Basic construction materials to make and decorate kites include glue, paint, scissors, straws, and cellophane paper. Kite-making materials, such as dowel pins, waterproof Tyvek paper, string and fabric may be purchased online from kite manufacturers. Other teachers provided kite and math activities at the third-, fourth- and fifth-grade levels.

## Standards

Language Arts:

L.A.A.1.3.2, L.A.A.2.2.7,  
L.A.A.2.3.1, L.A.A.2.3.2,  
L.A.A.2.3.5, L.A.A.2.3.8  
L.A.B.1.3.1, L.A.B.1.3.2,  
L.A.B.1.3.3, L.A.B.2.3.3,  
L.A.C.1.3.1, L.A.C.2.3.1,  
L.A.D.1.3.1, L.A.D.2.3.1

Math:

MA.B.1.2.1, MA.B.1.2.2,  
MA.B.2.2.1, MA.B.3.2.1,  
MA.C.1.2.1, MA.C.3.2.2

## Sponsored by



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# Sensational Scraps!



**S**ensational Scraps is a cross-curricular project that connects art, science, social studies, reading, and writing. This scrapbook project is a year-end activity that recounts and reviews the entire year's curriculum in the state-required science and social studies areas. The students highlight important concepts from their lessons with charts, diagrams and illustrations and create captions and format informative text that explain them in further detail.

Interwoven throughout are the elements of art and scrapbooking, which challenge the students to engage their imagination and artistic talents. As a culminating activity, the class invites parents to a Sensational Scrapbook Night, where students show their scrapbook and tell of highlights from the school year. The night ends on a memorable note when parents help their child complete the last page in their scrapbook before taking their finished product home.

*This project recaps lessons learned, taking the analysis and compilation of informative text from the everyday mundane to a new creative level.*

## Students

Fourth-grade students in a bilingual, gifted program participate in this project. It is easily adapted to other ages and achievement levels.

## Staff

Marlene Figueroa, a National Board Certified Teacher with a Master's degree in Reading Education from Florida International University, has taught for 17 years. During this time she spent 15 years in a full-time bilingual gifted program. She received grants from the Dade Reading Council and two Teacher Mini-Grants and three Disseminator grants, *Once Upon a Math Lesson*, *Fantastic*

*Units = Fun and Check it Out!*, from The Education Fund. She also wrote a federal grant that was awarded to help establish a community school at her school site.

## Materials & Resources

Art supplies: colored paper, scissors with specially-designed blades, stickers, construction paper, etc.; science and social studies textbooks, informative texts with colorful pictures and graphics.

## Standards

Language Arts:  
LA.A.1.2.1., 1.2.2, 1.2.3., 1.2.4;  
LA.B.1.2.1., 1.2.2, 1.2.3.;  
LA.C. 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3,  
1.2.4, 1.2.5.;  
LA.D. 1.2.1., 1.2.2.;  
LA.E. 1.2.1., 1.2.2., 1.2.3., 1.2.4

## Sponsored by



## Marlene Figueroa

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# Art of Story: Arts and Letters Literacy Links

Originally a Citi Success Fund Grant

In this project, students explore the works of African American artist Romare Bearden and write an original narrative based on his painting titled, “The Block,” a six-panel mixed-media collage. Beginning with quick-write interpretive exercises and a thorough online study of Bearden’s work, students’ writing assignments progress in depth and length. They then write a narrative based on a scene from the painting. Students work by themselves or in tandem, with one student beginning the story and another student continuing or ending the story. The project can also go full circle with students illustrating the written stories using the style of the original artist, Romare Bearden.

The stories and illustrations are then bound and shared with younger students in a buddy-reading program. Using art as the springboard to writing engages students in the writing process in a way mere lecturing could not accomplish.



*The Art of Story focuses on the storytelling aspect of art. It challenges students to connect visual art with the written word by drawing original stories from the intricate images in a painting and their own limitless imaginations.*

## Students

The project can be adjusted to fit any number of students at any grade or achievement level by altering the length of the story or the number of elements from the artwork to incorporate into the story.

## Staff

Katerina Nadel, a language arts teacher and Professional Development Liaison, has received a Florida Learn and Serve Pilot grant, The Education Fund’s Teacher Mini-Grant and Citi Success Fund Grant. She has published a memoir of growing up and received a bachelor’s degree in English from Florida Atlantic University.

Tatiana Sainz, a visual arts teacher, collaborates on initiatives and projects including the Florida Learn and Serve Pilot grant. Her master’s degree is from Florida International University. She has been awarded Citi Success Fund grants from The Education Fund. Both are founding members of the American High School Professional Learning Community for Service Learning.

## Materials & Resources

Materials used are the serial work of artists Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden, writing supplies, Internet access, children’s books - in particular books by Faith Ringgold which demonstrate how

picture and story are woven together. PowerPoints with example of paintings and artwork are helpful. Museum education programs provide ideas on integrating image and word.

## Standards

Language Arts:

LA.A.2.4.4, LA.B.2.4.1, LA.B.2.4.3, LA.B.2.4.4, LA.D.1.4.1, LA.D.2.4.1, LA.D.2.4.3, LA.D.2.4.6, LA.E.1.4.1, LA.E.1.4.5, LA.E.2.4.8

Visual Arts:

VA.A.1.4.3, VA.B.1.4.1, VA.B.1.4.4, VA.C.1.4.1, VA.C.1.4.2, VA.C.1.4.3, VA.D.1.4.2, VA.E.1.4.1

## Sponsored by



The Education Fund’s Fund for Reading Initiatives

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# Books in a "Bind"



This project is designed for students of any age to learn creative techniques for writing, then bookmaking, in order to publish their own story. Students will learn how to transform their stories into dramatic, artistic books to be showcased in their school libraries, classrooms or the Miami-Dade Youth Fair. When students establish a purpose for writing and see their work published and displayed they are motivated to continue writing.

Students in kindergarten have traditionally focused on concept books such as number books, ABC books, shape books, etc. However, advanced kindergarten students need to take the writing process a step further, writing short fiction with a beginning, middle and end. The project also works well in a third-grade classroom, as students develop character traits, plot and setting at a more advanced level and prepare for the Florida Writes test in fourth grade. By exposing students to "Writing Conferences," they identify what is valuable about their work, what revisions to make and how to proceed to the next step. Once students establish a good story, they turn their stories into unique books with sliders, pop-up features, hardcovers and other interesting publishing formats.

*Young children, with the need to communicate ideas and concepts, often begin the writing process before they even learn to read. As children establish this written need to communicate their thoughts, they can be taught to organize them without stifling their creativity.*

## Students

The project has worked successfully with a Kindergarten and a third-grade classroom. Its versatility allows it to be used from pre-K through 12th-grade.

## Staff

Teresa E. Acosta and Latha Murali have been working collaboratively in Miami-Dade County Schools for more than 14 years, during which time they have presented education workshops at the national and state level and have received grants for their original ideas in the areas of reading, phonics, mathematics and science. The Education Fund's

IMPACT II program has awarded Disseminator grants for their projects, *FCAT through the Lens of a Magnifying Glass*, *Hey! What's the Big Idea?*, *Fee, Fie, Fo, Fun!*, *Ph is for Phonics*, *F is for Fun* and *A Journey through Seussville*.

Both Mrs. Acosta and Ms. Murali graduated from Florida International University and hold master's degrees in Early Childhood Education. Both teachers received their National Board Certification in 2002 and currently serve as Assessors for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

## Materials & Resources

Materials for book binding range from simple and free on the Internet to complex and expensive. The Web Site, Mybinding.com, shows binding machines such as the Perfect Bind T-30 Thermal (\$98.95), which can be purchased through an Adapter grant.

## Standards

Language Arts:  
L.A.B.1.1,  
L.A.B.2.1

## Sponsored by



The Education Fund's  
Fund for Reading  
Initiatives

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# Discovering our Connections

The intent of this unit is to enable students to see, through a writer's use of universal symbols, colors, places and characters, the unconscious and conscious connections all cultures share. Although students are taught numerous FCAT skills, they often lack the ability to make connections between literary genres, cultures and historical periods which are needed to progress through the upper levels of high school English. Thus, teaching them about archetypes and their relevance, gives students another "key" to not only understanding literature, but their world. The symbiotic relationship between history and literature begins to emerge through an understanding of archetypes and plot similarities. Students discuss the idea of the collective unconscious and how it plays into the theories of symbolic connections across cultures, literary genres and time periods. They come to understand that people throughout history have similar concerns, questions, and daily tribulations and that symbols, whether unconsciously or purposefully placed, have a more profound meaning for the reader.



*This project's tools and teaching strategies establish a foundation of analysis and critical thinking skills that delivers the power of discovery and learning into the hands of students.*

## Students

It is recommended to teach this unit in ninth and tenth grade to establish solid skills needed for the upper levels of English, but it has also been used successfully with 12th-grade students. At-risk, regular, honors and gifted students benefit from this unit.

## Staff

Sheila Dymond has a master's degree and belongs to Phi Delta Kappa honor fraternity and NCTE. She began the gifted program at Miami Palmetto Senior High and at Felix Varela Senior High. Currently, she is the Language Arts Co-Chair and the SACS

Chair. She has used this unit for 11 years, modifying it as necessary to where it is now included in the curriculum maps for grade nine.

## Materials & Resources

An overhead projector, transparencies, and internet access are needed for this unit. CRISS strategies are used with this unit.

## Standards

Language Arts:  
 LA.910.1.6.1, 1.6.2, 1.6.5, 1.6.6, LA.910.1.7.1, 1.7.2, 1.7.3, 1.7.5, 1.7.6, 1.7.7, LA.910.2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.4, 2.1.6, 2.1.7, 2.1.8, 2.1.9, 2.1.10, LA.910.3.1.1, 3.1.2, LA.910.3.2.2, LA.910.3.3.2, LA.910.3.4.3, 3.4.4, 3.4.5, LA.910.4.2.3, LA.910.4.3.2

## Sponsored by

### Florida Matching Grants Program



## Sheila Dymond

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 Principal: Connie Navarro

# Hot off the Press and onto the Web

Originally a CBS4/WFOR/WBFS/MY33 Teacher Mini-Grant



The school's news team creates a newsletter for students and posts it on the school Web site. To begin the project, the media specialist briefs the students on Internet sources, plagiarism, journalism ethics and reporting techniques. After the roles and responsibilities are assigned, the team meets before school to do the morning news announcements and once-a-week after school to work on the newsletter.

The students work as reporters, editors, photographers, videographers and Web page designers. They select newsworthy assignments, conduct interviews, write articles, reviews and editorials as well as create video segments for the Web page. Being published motivates students to self-edit and produce quality written work. Going through the writing and publishing process helps students make real-life connections to their school work.

*This project introduces students to the numerous duties of news reporting from interview and first draft to video and printing press. Students are inspired to continuing writing as their reports and images are disseminated to a school-wide audience.*

## Students

This project was implemented with 20 fifth-grade students but is appropriate for the other intermediate (3rd & 4th) grades.

## Staff

Diana P. Rivas has been an educator for 24 years, 19 of them as a media specialist. She was nominated for Region 5 Teacher of the Year in 2006. She sponsors a Drama Club after school and is currently in the process of writing a children's book.

Mayra Perez has been teaching in the primary grades for 23 years. She is a National Board Certified Early Childhood Generalist. She enjoys cooking, reading

and spending time with her family. She has received The Education Fund's IMPACT II Disseminator and Adapter grants, Citi Team Mentor and Teacher Mini-Grants.

## Materials & Resources

Digital camera, video camera, newsletter templates, publishing software, spiral notebooks, video release forms, journalism information packet, use of a copy machine, and school bus for the field trip to a newspaper are needed for this program. To learn more about the field of journalism, guest speakers from a local television station are invited to speak at the school.

## Standards

Language Arts:

L.A. B.1.2.1, L.A. B.1.2.3, L.A. B. 2.2.1, L.A. B.2.2.4

Library/Information Literacy:

III.1, III.2, IV.2, V.3, VI.1, VI.3

Social Studies:

SS.C.2.1.3, SS.C.2.2.2

## Sponsored by



original  
**IMPRESSIONS**

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# Mirroring Our Minds

**R**esearch shows that reflection and journal writing plays a key role in stimulating the brain and mind. It has also been found that journal writing at all grade levels help students increase reading and writing skills. In this project, students are given a “daily reflection” which they are required to write a response to in journals they have personalized and decorated to reflect themselves.

The “daily reflections” are based on students’ feelings, family, culture or experiences that relate to their daily lives. As a part of their reading procedures, students have the opportunity to share their reflection for the day. Monthly, students create poems and stories using their “daily reflections” which are presented orally or posted on the bulletin board. Their final projects, which are read during a special writers showcase, are written about themselves based on their journal entries in a writing style of their choice.



*Students of all ages increase their reading and writing skills by recording their reflections in daily journals and presenting their insights through different forms of literature.*

## Students

This project was designed to be adaptable to almost any grade level and the needs of the group. The project was successfully implemented with a second-grade and a sixth-grade class. During language arts class, the students worked daily on journaling. In-class lessons, independent activities and home-learning assignments are part of the program.

## Staff

Patti Ward, a teacher for 25 years, has a Bachelor of Science Cum Laude from Barry University and a Masters of Urban Education from Florida International University. She has been

selected four times for “Who’s Who of American Teachers.” She also was the Chapter I teacher of the year, a MetLife TNLI Fellow and a grant recipient of The Education Fund’s Impact II and Citibank Success Fund grants, Cedar’s Medical Center grants, and Adopt-a-Classroom grant.

## Materials & Resources

Materials used are flash drives, two Make-Your-Own-Journal class kits, 70-page spiral journals and a computer program that designs scrapbooks. Daily journaling ideas for the entire year that correlate with the required reading program of M-DCPS are included in the Idea Packet for this proposal.

## Standards

Grades K-2:  
Language Arts:  
LA.B.2.1, LA.A.2.1, LA.C.1.1,  
LA.B.1.1, LA.C.3.1,

Social Studies:  
SS.B.1.1, SS.B.2.1, SS.D.2.1

Grades 3-5:  
Language Arts:  
LA.A.2.2, LA.B.1.2, LA.B.2.2,  
LA.C.3.2

Social Studies:  
SS.B.1.2, SS.B.2.2, SS.D.2.2

Grades 6-8:  
Language Arts:  
LA.B.1.3, LA.A.2.3, LA.B.2.3,  
LA.C.1.3, LA.D.2.3, LA.C.3.3,

Social Studies:  
SS.B.2.3, SS.B.1.3, SS.D.2.3

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**The Education Fund’s  
Fund for Reading  
Initiatives**

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# Without a Shadow of a Doubt: Shadow Puppets Lighting the Way to Literacy



The shadow puppet project is a school-wide production using Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera, "The Magic Flute," as a supplemental approach in implementing ESOL strategies. The aim is to help increase students' literacy and motivation to learn as well as develop cognitive and social skills of this particular target group.

To begin the project, the class researches the life of Mozart and discusses the different aspects of his life as a child prodigy. Then, to better understand theater production, they write their own mini-play about Mozart and his family life. Before watching and listening to a children's version of "The Magic Flute," they also study the music of that period. A production of the opera is then staged with students participating as puppeteers, puppet designers, stagehands, scenery designers, wardrobe supervisors, actors, sound effects, music and light operators, a props manager and a script prompter.

*Shadow puppet theatre is an enriching, unforgettable experience for students who benefit from learning the techniques of puppetry and the multifaceted art form of opera. Above all, they increase their literacy and their ability to think and solve problems on the spot.*

## Students

Thirty students from 3rd, 4th and 5th grades participated. They had no background knowledge of theater or puppeteering. The group met two-times per week during class time and also once-a-week after-school.

This project can easily be adapted to other ages using larger or smaller groups. This constructivistic approach is not limited to the special areas of music and visual arts. Faculty of language arts and other subject areas can also make beneficial use of the puppet theater to implement their lessons.

## Staff

Atala Mendiola, the lead teacher on the project, has

worked with the support of the school administration and teachers, the technology specialist, school secretary, the community relations liaison, and parent volunteers.

## Materials & Resources

The puppet theater was built for the stage in the school cafeteria. Project materials include: plywood, wood screws, door hinges, focusing lanterns, duct tape, staple gun, drill, hammer, and wood cutting tools. Polysilk fabric was used as the screen and was decorated using paint, foam brushes and rollers. The main resource is the Cleveland Orchestra's Series of Educational Concerts. A fieldtrip to a performance, such as "The Mozart

Experience" at the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, is recommended.

## Standards

Language Arts:  
Fluency: (LA.3.1.5),  
Vocabulary Development (LA.3.1.6),  
Reading Comprehension: (LA.3.1.7), Creative Writing: (LA.3.4.1), Media Literacy: (LA.3.6.3),

Visual Arts: (VA.A.1.2), (VA.B.1.2), (VA.C.1.2), (VA.D.1.2), (VA.E.1.2).

Music: (MU.C.1.1), (MU.D.1.1), (MU.E.1.1).

Theater: (TH.A.1.1), (TH.A.2.1), (TH.A.3.1).

## Sponsored by

### Florida Matching Grants Program



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# Investigating Math through Art

In this project, students investigate the mathematics found in art and create artworks that highlight the relationship. After students view art videos or reproductions, they create art projects that explore math concepts such as spatial sense, properties of figures and shapes, proportions, distance and angles. Each month a math concept is presented in math class and further explored during art class with the art teacher playing an essential role. At the end of the month, a culminating project is created which demonstrates an understanding of both proper art form and mathematical understanding. In one lesson, students look for patterns in pottery, quilts and oriental rugs. Taking three geometric shapes they find, they each design a square using symmetry which are then pieced together to form a paper quilt. Teaching students to recognize, use, reproduce, create and analyze patterns is valuable as patterns are an underlying theme in mathematics.



*What better way to make mathematics enjoyable than to give students the opportunity to investigate art through the ages? With the knowledge they uncover, they are able to see the underlying math concepts they use to make quilts, paper flowers, lanterns, mosaics and mobiles.*

## Students

Although used with fifth-grade students, it can easily be adapted to any age level. It is especially effective with low-performing students in preparing for the FCAT.

## Staff

Isis Silva has been teaching in Miami-Dade County Public Schools for 7 years and is a National Board Certified Teacher in Middle Childhood Generalist. She holds a Specialist degree in Educational Leadership, a Master's degree in Reading, and Bachelor's in Elementary Education. She is a multiple recipient of The Education Fund's IMPACT II Adapter and Disseminator grants and the Citi Success Fund.

## Materials & Resources

Art materials are needed to make small foldable boxes, quilts, paper flowers, lanterns, mosaics, mobiles, etc. include paints, brushes, foam shapes, stencils, colored paper, origami paper, construction paper, poster board, markers, tissue paper, fishing wire, twist ties, glue, hangers, and scissors with decorative cutting blades. Various works of art, either reproductions or projected with an lcd projector, are essential for students to view, copy or to inspire their own creations.

## Standards

Mathematics:  
 Number Sense, Concepts and Operations: M.A.A.1.2.3, M.A.A.3.2.3  
 Measurement: M.A.B.1.2.1  
 Geometry and Spatial Sense: M.A.C.2.2.1, M.A.C.3.2.1  
 Algebraic Thinking: M.A.D.1.2.1  
 Data Analysis and Probability: M.A.E.1.2.1, M.A.E.3.2.2

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# Mathletes Boot Camp

Originally a Citi Success Fund Grant



Students in math classes from Algebra I to Calculus II are involved in monthly competitions that encourage enthusiasm about and growth in mathematical knowledge, as well as collaboration between students of various mathematical abilities and backgrounds. Monthly activities include October's "Scary Math Problems", February's "I Love Math" activities and March's celebration of PI week. Students also look forward to the "Where are the Numbers?" scavenger hunt, Rubik's cube or Monopoly tournament and a calculator trivia contest with rotating stations throughout the school.

*Through a series of school-wide math competitions and classroom activities, math students get a brain workout during this six-month-long "Boot Camp." Math teachers, the administration, TV-production class and even the school chorus promote the celebrations and cheer on the Mathletes.*

## Students

All math students at the school participate in the Boot Camp. The collaboration of the math teachers also helps to build a core of student Mathletes that represent the school at various district and state competitions.

## Staff

Sandra Argüelles Daire, a National Board Certified Teacher, has been teaching for 18 years. She is currently pursuing a doctorate in Instructional Technology and Distance Education from Nova Southeastern University. Ms. Daire continuously writes grants to support the

Mathematics activities and competitions that she hosts throughout the school year at Felix Varela Senior High.

## Materials & Resources

The IMPACT II Idea Packet contains sample questions and activities for the six Boot Camp monthly competitions. Each requires its own materials, from beads to make pi necklaces to origami paper to fold paper hearts. Other supplies needed are Sudoku puzzles, Monopoly games, Rubik's Cubes, graphing calculators, rulers, measuring tapes, circular objects, yarn, multi-colored construction paper and hole punchers.

Helpful Web sites are:

[www.123Greetings.com](http://www.123Greetings.com)  
[www.edhelper.com/pidaymath](http://www.edhelper.com/pidaymath)  
and [www.exploratorium.edu/learning\\_studio/pi](http://www.exploratorium.edu/learning_studio/pi).

Inexpensive prizes and trinkets are available from Oriental Trading Company.

## Standards

Mathematics:  
MA.A.1.4.1,  
MA.A.1.4.2.,  
MA.C.1.4.1.,  
MA.C.3.4.2,  
MA.B.3.4.1.,  
MA.D.1.4.1.,  
MA.B.4.4.1.,  
MA.B.4.4.2.,  
MA.D.1.4.1.,  
MA.D.2.4.1.,  
MA.D.1.4.1,  
MA.D.1.4.2

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Tina Rosenberg  
Foundation**

## Sandra Argüelles Daire

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# Shopping for Life Skills

The strategy of the program is to expose special education students to real-life situations in which they apply basic math skills. First the students learn how to measure in order to bake cakes to buy and sell with play money. Students are equally enthusiastic as they work in and shop at their in-class store, “Chachie’s Food Market,” stocked with empty food containers brought from home. In a shop setting, students were eager to help and teach their classmates thus reinforcing lessons they had learned. After mastering transactions with play money, they apply their knowledge to real life by shopping at Publix, buying their own lunch, and paying their own bus fare during field trips. This project collaborates what research has found to be true: that children learn best when they are actively involved in learning experiences they enjoy. Shopping for Life Skills builds students’ self esteem and enriches their lives because it develops in students the math skills necessary to participate in everyday situations.



*Math scores improve for special education students who, having difficulties performing simple math operations such as counting money, practice these skills while working and shopping in real-life situations.*

## Students

Two SPED math classes comprising Educable Mentally Handicapped, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Visual Impaired, and Physically Impaired students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade participated in the project every other day.

This project can be adapted and modified to the students’ cognitive abilities based on their ages and strengths. Larger classes can be accommodated if divided into small groups.

## Staff

Carmen Gardiner is a National Board Certified Teacher with 13 years of experience working with the SPED program. She has used this project since 2005.

## Materials & Resources

Students stocked the food market with empty food and beverage containers that they brought from home. They used Microsoft Publisher to make banners for the store and to design price labels to put on the items. For the cooking activities, students took turns bringing tools and ingredients from home. Money for public

transportation and items purchased during the supermarket field trip were provided by parents.

## Standards

Mathematics:  
MA.A 1.3.1,  
MA.A 1.3.2,  
MA.A 1.3.4,  
MA.A 3.3.3

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# A Taste of Science

Originally a Citi Success Fund Grant



Producing change is what science is all about and is an important part of Strand A of the science standards, the Nature of Matter. By producing a change, one can learn something about the material from the way it changes. Sometimes the change is small and one must look closely to see what has occurred. Looking for and making changes using real food items can be exciting and motivating for students. Students clamor to be “kitchen chemists” when their lessons include a dissolving act in “Breaking Up is Hard to Do,” digging for chips and leaving a landscape full of holes in “Mining Resources” and mixing water with jello to produce a suspension in “Great Goopy Gumdrops.” Both cooks and scientists use process skills as they measure, predict and interpret data. Learning science using inexpensive and everyday food items helps students recognize real-world connections and encourages them to recreate the experiments at home.

*Try a few food science activities as an appetizer and give students some food for thought! Combine the benefits of hands-on activities with the increased motivation that food brings, and students will “eat up” the science standards in the process. Bon Appetit!*

## Students

150 fifth-grade students with varied levels of achievement participated, including ESE students. The students have Science Lab twice-a-week for one hour. The project can be adapted for use with grades 3-5 in both small or large groups.

## Staff

Arlene Trotter has been teaching in M-DCPS for more than 25 years and is currently a Science Lab teacher. She holds an M.S. from Nova University and an Ed. Specialist degree in Science Education from the University of Miami. She has taught workshops through the M-DCPS Division of Science

and is an advocate of early science education. She has received numerous grants through The Education Fund including Citi Success Fund and Teacher Mini-Grants.

## Materials & Resources

Basic measuring materials such as cups, graduated cylinders, balances, bowls and spoons are needed. Household kitchen materials used include jello, baking soda, vinegar, fruits and vegetables. Being able to taste their experiments encourages students to use the media center and science books to research other food experiments. Literature that mentions food, such as *Thunder Cake*, *Stone Soup*,

and *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*, is also incorporated into the curriculum.

## Standards

Science:  
 SC.A.1.2.2.,  
 SC.A.1.2.4.,  
 SC.A.1.2.1.,  
 SC.A.1.2.3.,  
 SC.H.1.2.4.,  
 SC.H.3.2.4.

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### Florida Matching Grants Program



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# CSI for Ecology

Originally a Citi Success Fund Grant

Through hands-on “Critical Science Investigations,” young scientists research several diverse species of animals and become familiar with proper clinical laboratory techniques. They learn how animals relate to each other and their habitats based on evidential findings and interpretation of comparative anatomy, classification and organization of the animal kingdom.

This program makes it possible for science teachers to fill a critical need in the middle school stage of transitional development, while cultivating their students’ understanding and applied knowledge in the essential areas of ecology and biology. Role playing as interning scientists, students relish their approach as inquisitive active learners, and communicate their analyses on dissections and hands-on observations through written and oral reports. These “learning through inquiry” activities, develop proficiency and critical thinking in scientific methodology.



*These “learning through inquiry” activities, offering an “inside view of animals,” develop the lab investigation and communication skills in a class full of “Scientist Interns.” This program develops students’ ability to think and act in ways associated with inquiry, using the appropriate tools and techniques to gather and interpret data.*

## Students

Designed for 100-150 seventh-grade regular and ESE students, it can also be adapted for any class in grades 6-12. It is most effective in small groups, so students can communicate, using laboratory terminology, during inquiry activities.

## Staff

Gwen Foote has been a professional artist, exhibiting world wide, as well as a medical technologist and veterinary clinic owner. She has taught at the elementary and college level on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Her degrees include: a B.S. in Biomedical Science, Texas A&M; a B.S. in

Elementary Education, Black Hills State College; and a master’s in Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Texas. She is certified in k-12 art, special education and has a gifted and talented endorsement. She was honored by the Oglala Lakota Tribe for her humanitarian and education efforts and in 2007 was a Science Education Ambassador to Egypt.

## Materials & Resources

Basic dissection supplies, preserved specimens of frogs and mammalian eyes, worms, CD of virtual dissections, latex gloves, safety glasses, posters, and access to Web sites such as [www.froguts.com](http://www.froguts.com) which offer on-line virtual dissections.

## Standards

Science:  
 SC.A.1.3, SC.F.1.3, SC.F.1.3.2,  
 SC.F.1.3.2.1, SC.F.1.3.3,  
 SC.F.1.3.6.1, SC.F.1.3.6.2,  
 SC.F.2.3, SC.F.2.3.1,  
 SC.F.2.3.3, SC.F.2.3.3.1,  
 SC.F.2.3.3.2, SC.G.2.3.3,  
 SC.G.2.3.3.1, SC.G.2.3.4,  
 SC.G.2.3.4.1, SC.H.1.3,  
 SC.H.2.3, SC.H.3.3

## Sponsored by



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# Fishing for a Way to Preserve our Marine Environment

*Originally a Teacher Mini-Grant*



**M**iddle school students experience the wonders of the South Florida marine ecosystems as well as the negative impact of water pollution on the marine environment. During field trips, they conduct water quality field studies, collecting and analyzing scientific data while recording their field experiences through a series of videos and still photographs. Part of their field studies includes up-close lessons on marine life while snorkeling and lessons on responsible fishing practices while enjoying fishing. Back in the classroom, students brainstorm potential solutions to water pollution and document and communicate their findings by way of photographs, posters and brochures. Students assume an advocacy role in denouncing water pollution, writing letters to community leaders, delivering public service announcements and volunteering in restoration efforts.

*This project extends students' learning experiences of the South Florida marine ecosystems with field work and subsequent classroom activities that provide them with an avenue for initiating positive changes within the environment.*

## Students

This project is designed for middle-school students of all academic and achievement levels.

## Staff

Michael Weiss has been a teacher for 22 years. He currently heads the science department at Riviera Middle School. He served for four years as a Curriculum Support Specialist in the Division of Mathematics and Science Education, where he provided workshops and modeled lessons for teachers throughout the county. He has received numerous grants, including Citi Success Fund and Teacher Mini-Grants from The Education Fund. He

is also a Teachers Network Leadership Institute Fellow and holds an M.S. in Science Education from Florida International University. With the assistance of the graphic arts and music instructors, they edit and enhance a comprehensive video on marine ecosystems with graphics, music, and other features to present to the school community.

## Materials & Resources

Digital diver's camera, 29-gallon aquarium kit, water pollutants purification lab, digital memory cards, photo paper, water test kit are needed. Snorkeling, kayaking and fishing field trips are sponsored by the M-DCPS Division of Life Skills.

## Standards

The project covers the benchmarks within the eight strands in science.

## Sponsored by



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# In the Green!

This project on environmental awareness and action encompasses not only science and its benchmarks, but most other areas of academics as well. Students begin by learning about the earth's major ecosystems. They then work on a number of easily maintained projects including recycling batteries/cell phones, composting, creating native plant gardens, growing organic vegetables, maintaining a butterfly garden, and promoting a water conservation and recycling campaign.

To incorporate technology and language arts into the program, students create a flyer listing simple ways to help the planet, design logos and slogans for their projects and create posters on the benefits of conserving water and recycling. Students then send their materials with letters to principals at other schools, advocating that they, too, "go green."



*Teaching about the world's ecosystems and what can be done to protect them with water conservation, recycling and gardening projects not only helps students "go green" but exposes them to real-life application of concepts tested on the science FCAT.*

## Students

This project was designed for fifth-grade students because they take the science FCAT each year. Currently 85 fifth-grade students, including ESE and gifted classes participate once or twice each week. It has also been introduced successfully in grades K-7. With tailored lessons, all grade levels can be involved.

## Staff

Kathleen Cattie, the science lab and math teacher for the past four years at Fienberg-Fisher K8 Center, was nominated for Science Teacher of the Year for three years and Math Teacher of the Year last year. She recently received a grant from *Organic Gardening* magazine and

donations from a local nursery and Whole Foods Market to create and maintain student gardens. Student volunteers working after school are especially helpful for the project.

## Materials & Resources

Rakes, shovels and hoses are borrowed from the school custodians, but some kid-friendly tools and hand tools are recommended. Gloves, soil, mulch, seeds and plants are needed. Fieldtrips to Fairchild Tropical Garden and Biscayne Nature Center (their programs correlate to the science benchmarks that address environmental issues) and guest speakers from environmental organizations enhance the program.

## Standards

Science:  
 SC.B.1.2.1, SC.B.1.2.2,  
 SC.D.1.2.4, SC.G.1.2.2,  
 SC.G.1.2.3, SC.G.2.2.1,  
 SC.H.1.2.1, SC.H.1.2.2

Social Studies:  
 SS.A.1.2.1, SS.A.3.2.3,  
 SS.A.5.2.8, SS.B.1.2.3,  
 SS.B.2.2.1, SS.B.2.2.3

## Sponsored by



## Kathleen Cattie

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# Let's Salsa – Connected Learning through Gardening



In this hands-on integrated curriculum, students are able to see, smell, touch and eat the fruits of their labors which energizes and motivates their learning. A salsa garden of tomatoes, peppers and onions is designed, planted and cultivated by students to produce their own brand of salsa to present to the school's community Dade Partners. While gardening, students are exposed to experiences which instill in them a sense of responsibility and accomplishment.

Curriculum-related activities in the area of science include conducting experiments and identifying plants. For math, students create a detailed garden map and use scientific measuring tools such as rain gauges and thermometers. To meet language arts requirements, students keep a garden journal, write stories and poems and have a garden vocabulary spelling bee. For art, they sketch, photograph and create garden signs.

*This project engages students in experiential environmental learning by exploring the workings of nature through an integrated curriculum.*

## Students

Eighty one students in second to fifth grade participated in the research, design, and cultivation of the salsa garden. The Environmental Club, consisting of approximately 18 students, met bi-weekly to plan the project and schedule groups for garden care.

Students were enthusiastically involved in extending the project to include a nature photo exhibit and guided garden tours with lessons given to other classes.

## Staff

Carole Slonin, in her 31 years of teaching, has assisted on many grant writing teams and

presented her ideas at local and state conferences. She has received Impact II Disseminator and Adapter grants, Teacher Mini-Grants and Citi Success Fund grants from The Education Fund. In addition to teaching, she is a teacher advisor for *SuperScience* magazine.

## Materials & Resources

An indoor garden is possible, but an outdoor spot near sprinklers or available water is best. Supplies depend on garden size and may already be available or donated (such as mulch, tools, etc.).

Recommended is an on-site MAST Academy WOW (Weather on Wheels) visit. The project was part of the

2008 Fairchild Tropical Challenge winning 1st place in the garden portion.

## Standards

Science:  
SC.G.1.2

Math:  
MA.B.4.2.2

Language Arts:  
LA.A.2.2.8  
LA.B.2.1.1

Art:  
VA.A.1.2.1

## Sponsored by



## Carole Slonin

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# Look! Look into my Cabinet of Natural Curiosities!

**L**ook! Look into My Cabinet of Natural Curiosities! opens a window to the wonders and marvels that unite and distinguish the natural world by giving students the opportunity to explore a scientific phenomena in a foreign locale from every disciplinary angle. Students in small teams select a biological theme, pinpoint a global region to study the topic, then, using maps, journals, oral reports, math measurements, historical research and scientific methods, plan an expedition.



This inexpensive, high-energy project not only connects all content areas, but allows students to learn about diverse cultures and backgrounds. Team members alternate roles, sharing responsibilities, and finally apply their creative talents to create and/or gather specimens and artifacts, construct a display case and deliver an oral presentation which offers their classmates a well-rounded introduction into this unique part of the natural and physical world.

*Start with a theme, choose a setting, then set off on an interdisciplinary expedition, approaching the destination through biology, language arts, mathematics, social studies, and art.*

## Students

Although designed for high school classes, the project may be adapted for any level and multiple content areas. Groups of four or five, each captained by a student with outstanding leadership abilities, are recommended.

## Staff

Eloisa Mena has taught science since 1994. She holds a Professional Teaching Certificate in biology, and is Nationally Board Certified in Biology Adolescence/Young Adulthood. She has been named Teacher of the Year and Science Teacher of the Year, as well as being selected as CDC Science Ambassador and four times as Who's Who

Among America's Teachers. Mena has been awarded grants from The Education Fund's Citi Team Mentor and Teacher Mini-Grant programs.

## Materials & Resources

Project display cases can be fashioned from copy-paper boxes or wooden wine cases. Decoration materials vary depending on the project, but may include shells, flowers, butterflies, etc.; and art supplies such as colored paper, construction paper, coloring pencils, crayons, watercolors, scissors, glue, and old magazines. Internet access and a color printer are also needed.

## Standards

- GRADE 9 – 12  
 Science:  
 SC.A.1.4, SC.F.1.4, SC.F.2.4,  
 SC.G.1.4, SC.H.1.4
- Language Arts:  
 LA.A.1.4, LA.A.2.4, LA.B.1.4,  
 LA.B.2.4, LA.C.1.4, LA.C.3.4
- Mathematics:  
 MA.A.1.4, MA.B.1.4,  
 MA.B.3.4, MA.B.4.4,  
 MA.C.3.4, MA.E.1.4
- Social Studies:  
 SS.A.1.4, SS.B.1.4
- Visual Arts:  
 VA.A.1.4, VA.B.1.4

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### Florida Matching Grants Program



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# Super Fast Plants – Science Fair Project Made Easy!



The main objective is to enhance students' learning in designing and conducting controlled investigative experiments to better understand science process skills and the scientific method. This unit demonstrates the scientific method with in-class science fair projects which focus on one specific area, rapid-cycling fast plants. "Wisconsin Fast Plants" are especially well suited for classroom study because they are hardy, compact, thrive under artificial lights, and complete their life cycle in about 40 days.

Working in teams, students formulate a question and set-up experimental design plans which include the variables, such as water, light, fertilizer, space and pollination. Through data collection, measurement, observation, and recording, students discover the effects on plants of the manipulation of their chosen variable. The small group dynamic creates a forum in which students share ideas, discoveries and skills.

*Completing science fair projects at home can be very challenging. Working in school class teams, through a step-by-step approach, students are more likely to grasp the scientific method and to acquire the science process skills needed for the fifth-grade science FCAT.*

## Students

Fifty students in fourth- and fifth-grade classes participated in teams of four to research and create their science fair projects. However, the exercises are appropriate for intermediate students of all achievement levels. The project is designed to be taught in one-hour classes, three times a week for eight weeks.

## Staff

DeeDee Conte is a gifted facilitator who has been teaching in M-DCPS for 25 years. In addition to teaching, she is a teacher trainer for the science department at the district level. For two years she was an Educational

Specialist for the district's Division of Advance Academics. She has also worked as an educational consultant for Carolina Biological Supply Company, conducting teacher workshops throughout the U.S. on strategies of science inquiry. She has presented at numerous local, state and national conferences on science and technology. From The Education Fund, she has received Impact II Disseminator and Adapter grants.

## Materials & Resources

Most materials used are simple household objects. Other items, such as "Wisconsin Fast Plant" growth kits may be purchased

through Carolina Biological Supply Company. A field trip extension to Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden is a valuable enhancement.

## Standards

Science:  
SC.G.1.2.3, SC.H.1.2.1,  
SC.H.1.2.2, SC.H.1.2.3

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Dr. Robin P. Behrman

# Adventures in Medieval Times

Through this hands-on unit of study, students are immersed in the colorful history of medieval times. These adventures connect literature to social studies and other subject areas such as math and art. Students create life-size dolls dressed in elaborate medieval garb and personalized with a photo of their face to project them back to the Middle Ages. In addition, they study castle dimensions and coordinates to replicate castle construction, design a personal coat of arms and create a code of chivalry.

Students will be introduced to various historical novels that inspire them to travel back into medieval times and explore the social structure, government, culture, art forms, scientific discoveries and historic personalities of that era. The study will trace which medieval influences shape our contemporary culture and why they are important.



*The Middle Ages have been romanticized, reviled and fantasized. But what were they really like and how do they relate to young people in the 21st Century? This project challenges students to answer these questions, exploring major themes and lifestyles in medieval civilization with imaginative hands-on activities and cultural research.*

## Students

Adventures in Medieval Times was designed for fourth- and fifth-grade gifted students in a full-time bilingual program in which students work 60 percent of the time in English and 40 percent in Spanish. It can be adapted to all ages and achievement levels.

## Staff

Josefina P. Novoa, is a National Board Certified Teacher with a master's degree in reading. She has been teaching for 23 years, 18 of these in the gifted program. She is a recipient of two Disseminator grants from The Education Fund for "Fantastic Units=FUN" and "Kids Creating Culture."

## Materials & Resources

To enrich this unit of study with literature, students read the novels of *The Castle in the Attic* and the *Battle for the Castle* by Elizabeth Winthrop. *The Time Traveler Series of Medieval Times* is a great resource to connect literature to social studies and other subject areas such as math and art. The use of art materials and the capability of working in small cooperative groups is a necessity.

## Standards

Language Arts:  
 LA.A.2.2.1, LA.A.1.2.2,  
 LA.A.1.2.3; LA.A.2.2.1,  
 LA.A.2.2.2, LA.A.2.2.4;  
 LA.B.1.2.1, LA.B.1.2.2,  
 LA.B.1.2.3; LA.C.3.2.1,  
 LA.C.3.2.3; LA.D. 1.2.1,  
 LA.D.1.2.2; LA.D.2.2.1,  
 LA.D.2.2.2., LA.D.2.2.3,  
 LA.D.224, LA.D.2.2.5;  
 LA.E.1.2.1., LA.E.1.2.2.,  
 LA.E.1.2.3., LA.E.2.4.,  
 LA.E.1.2.5

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## Josefina P. Novoa

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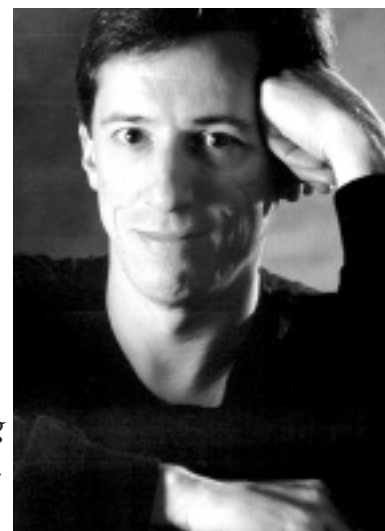
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## A Message from James Grippando, author of *Leapholes*

*The American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional association in the world. One mission the ABA takes seriously is to try to educate the public about the legal system: how it really works, the importance of the rule of law, and what lawyers and judges can and can't do. We don't see education and entertainment as mutually exclusive.*

*Thankfully, thousands of teachers, students, librarians, and book lovers across the country share our view. We are grateful to all of them, and we want to make special mention here of some of the dedicated professionals who have volunteered their time and talent to bring *Leapholes*—the first novel for young readers ever published by the American Bar Association—into the classrooms.*

James Grippando



### Special Thanks to:

Nancy T. Hector  
New Hampshire Bar, for the Pilot Program  
National Association of Bar Executives  
Austin Bar for Law Day 2007  
Texas Bar Association  
Morgan Lewis & Bockius

### Teachers and librarians who created classroom materials:

**Chapter by Chapter Study Guide:**  
Margaret Spencer, Marietta, Georgia

**Accelerated Reader Test:**  
Debra Divich, Media Specialist, Ramblewood Middle School, Florida

**Classroom Projects:**  
Barbara Ringenberger, Magnet Program Coordinator, Plantation Middle School, Florida

**Broward County Library:**  
Gina Moon, Teen Services Coordinator

**Belmont Middle School 5th grade:**  
Laura Dwyer, Belmont, New Hampshire

**Timberlane Regional Middle School:**  
Elaine Binnetter, Sarah McCarthy, Susan Broadhurst, Christine Paradis, Plaistow, New Hampshire

### American Bar Association (ABA) Resources and Programs for Teachers and Students

**False Confessions:** A resource program which connects law students to classes which have read *Leapholes*. The 'False Confessions' program investigates wrongful convictions within the criminal justice system. Law students provide insights on the book and use a supplement created by Jack Hanna, Director, ABA Criminal Justice Section. [www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org).

**U.S. Supreme Court Case Studies:** In-depth profiles of 31 critical U.S. Supreme Court cases: [www.abanet.org/publiced/youth/sia/holtcases/home.html](http://www.abanet.org/publiced/youth/sia/holtcases/home.html)

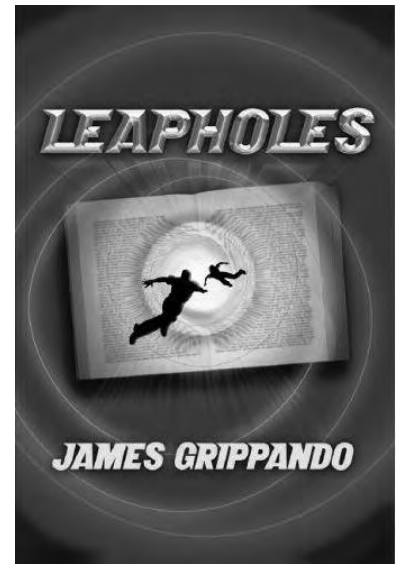
**Florida Bar Speakers Bureau:** The Florida Bar Speakers Bureau offers to schools, businesses, community groups and organizations experienced attorneys to speak about legal topics, such as the role of lawyers, the significance of Florida's constitution, and threats to the U.S. justice system. Fill-out an on-line speaker request at [www.floridabar.org/DIVCOM/PI/Speakers.nsf/WRequest?OpenForm](http://www.floridabar.org/DIVCOM/PI/Speakers.nsf/WRequest?OpenForm) or call at 850-561-5773. There is no fee for this service.

**Law Day:** Fifty years ago President Eisenhower proclaimed the first Law Day a "day of national dedication to the principle of government under law." Law Day is celebrated in the month of May as a way to foster public understanding of the rule of law and its role in a free society. Download a free Law Day Resource guide with dozens of on-line resources at [www.abanet.org/publiced/lawday/2008/home.shtml](http://www.abanet.org/publiced/lawday/2008/home.shtml).

# Leapholes for the Classroom

**L***epholes*, a time travel novel with a legal twist, brings law books and historic legal precedents to life. Though a work of fiction, all of the cases woven into the *Leapholes* storyline are important cases from American legal history. With the help of a mysterious and magical old lawyer, children “leap” into law books, travel through time, and come face to face with Rosa Parks, Dred Scott, and other real people with real problems in our nation’s most famous legal cases.

Legal concepts in the book are explored using a chapter-by-chapter study guide interspersed with an array of engaging projects that include conducting mock trials, re-enacting scenes from the novel, filming a movie trailer, interviewing historical figures in a talk show format or creating board games that integrate the book’s storyline with the cases derived from the book.



*Leapholes for the Classroom brings the law to life by linking standards-based language arts and social studies activities to famous court cases through James Grippando’s fast-paced novel, Leapholes.*

## Students

*Leapholes* classroom projects are designed for grades 5 through 12 for use by a wide range of students, from gifted to learning disabled. For the game activity, students are assigned to groups of 3 or 4.

## Staff

Monica Rosales has taught bilingual curriculum content students, inclusion, regular, advanced, honors and gifted social studies. She has received numerous awards/recognitions including: 2004 Doral Middle School, Rookie Teacher of the Year, 2007 Miami-Dade County Council for the Social Studies, Teacher of the Year finalist, 2008 Doral Middle School Teacher of the Year and the 2008 U.S. History

Teacher of the Year for the Biscayne Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).

## Materials & Resources

To promote creativity, recycled materials are used to make the games: magazine cut-outs, used game boards and playing pieces. If need be, play money and game pieces may be purchased from a dollar store and cardboard/poster board used for the game boards. Guest lecturers, including lawyers and judges, enhance the classroom discussions. A *Leapholes* PowerPoint, a study guide and the accompanying *Leapholes* IMPACT II Idea Packet can be downloaded from The Education Fund’s Web site at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org).

Special school discounts for copies of *Leapholes* are available at the American Bar Association, [www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org). Public library visits are recommended to conduct primary document research on the cases.

## Standards

Social Studies:  
SS.C.2.4.3, SS.C.2.4.5,  
SS.C.2.4.6;

Language Arts (Grades 7-12):  
LA1.7.7, LA6.2.1, LA6.2.2,  
LA6.1.1;

NCSS Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: II Time Continuity and Change, V Individuals, Groups and Institutions, X Civic Ideals and Practices.

## Sponsored by



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Tatiana De Miranda

# Replicas of Life during the Holocaust



**B**y challenging students to visually recreate a scene from this dark period of history, this project inspires an enriching learning experience on tactile and intellectual levels. Students invest their emotions and empathies far more profoundly than they would from the passive absorption of news reels and history books.

Students first write poetry of what freedom means to them and read poems written by children in the Holocaust. They then research life during the Holocaust online and in libraries before reading nonfiction first-person accounts of the period such as *All But My Life* by Gerda Weissmann Klein. In groups they develop a timeline of events and create a PowerPoint collage with music of what life in Europe was like during the Holocaust. Studying the suffering and hardships of this era initiates an examination of the larger issues of hatred, tolerance, discrimination, persecution and freedom.

Finally students independently choose a scene from the period to write about and depict in a three-dimensional form. One such display depicted a bright yellow side and black side of the wall confining the Warsaw Ghetto to juxtapose the stark contrast between life on each side.

*Studying the suffering and hardships during the time of the Holocaust initiates an examination of the larger issues of hatred, tolerance, discrimination, persecution and freedom.*

## Students

The project is currently being used with 75 ninth-grade students, but has been successful with classes in grades eight to twelve. It can be used as a class-, department-, or school-wide project.

## Staff

Meital Taly Furer has been teaching for eight years and has used this project for four. She received two Adaptor grants and one Teacher Mini-Grant from The Education Fund. She attended the University of Miami Summer Institute on the Holocaust, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Belfer Conference and several

workshops on teaching the Holocaust through Miami-Dade County Public Schools and CAJE.

## Materials & Resources

Students need access to age-appropriate Holocaust literature—films and PowerPoint are very helpful. A field trip to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Miami Beach is highly recommended [www.holocaustmmb.org](http://www.holocaustmmb.org). Dr. Miriam Klein Kassenoff of M-DCPS provides expertise on the Holocaust, 305-995-1201.

Another local resource is the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center ([www.hdec.org](http://www.hdec.org)). They host monthly presentations by authors and conduct a writing and visual arts contest for middle and senior high students. Their museum is to open in 2009. Students are awarded with certificates for their projects.

A space, such as a media center or auditorium, is needed to facilitate other classes in viewing the display of student projects.

## Standards

Language Arts:  
L.A.A. 2.4.1,  
L.A.A.2.4.4,  
L.A.A.2.4.8

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**Robert Russell  
Memorial  
Foundation**

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# Don Quijote para jóvenes

2005 marked the 400th anniversary of the publication of Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote de la Mancha*. In addition to the educational, literary, cultural and social events which took place around the world to celebrate the anniversary, extensive research was conducted on the Don in universities, libraries and the media. This project represents a compilation, for all grade levels, of the innovative and entertaining lessons, resources, projects and activities generated for the anniversary in Spain that appeared in schools, museums, newspapers and libraries.

The project encompasses lessons in Spanish on reading, math, theater arts, social studies, science and art based on the exploits of Don Quixote. Students engage in measurements, sequencing, puppetry, costume and set design, map making, hydrology, plant and animal science. This interdisciplinary approach to one of the world's most influential works of fiction gives it the attention and study that it deserves and hopefully will inspire many students to read it when they are older.



*Spanish language skills will increase, as students engage in a wide range of innovative activities that introduce them to a much-loved world literary classic.*

## Students

Don Quijote para jóvenes was compiled, designed, and developed for Spanish for Native Speakers and Spanish as a Second Language at the elementary, middle, secondary, and postsecondary levels.

## Staff

Xosé Manuel Alvariño is a China Fulbright-Hays Fellow and a National Endowment for the Humanities Recipient. He has conducted workshops at local, state, national and international conferences on subjects such as Shakespeare in Spanish, bilingual/ESOL instructional strategies for the elementary classroom, and literacy through the study of

Anglo, Black, and Latino cultures in the Americas. He has received various grants from The Education Fund.

## Materials & Resources

This project covers a wide range of Spanish-language instruction from elementary to post-secondary education. As such, the materials, supplies, and resources vary according to the students' level of instruction, but all are listed in the accompanying Idea Packet for this program.

## Standards

This project covers several benchmarks within the strands of the Sunshine State Standards for elementary and secondary instruction in Spanish for reading, math, science, art and social studies. These skills are transferable to meet English language FCAT objectives, where appropriate.

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Roxanna D. Herrera

# Conexión Cultural



This project, initiated in Spanish for native speakers, is based on the study and comparison of outstanding personalities of different Latin and South American countries and those of the U.S. It allows the students to research and present to the class important figures from their countries of origin to be compared with those in the American culture.

The students work in a number of different mediums creating collages, timelines and graphs to use in their presentations and conduct home interviews to truly grasp the cultural reality of their background. Then they select a hero from the U.S. to compare and contrast similarities and differences. In the end, students learn that people have faced struggles, unfairness and oppression everywhere in the world and the true heroes in any country are those brave men and women who fought against those evils.

*This project facilitates the cultural assimilation process of new students from foreign countries, introducing them to the historical figures who have shaped the U.S. while studying similar heroes from their own country of origin.*

## Students

The project is designed for 5th -12th grade students at all achievement levels. It is especially applicable in Spanish class to link Hispanic and American cultures, but the concept can be used in any social studies and language arts class. Students with limited English have been successful learning and practicing all these concepts in the Spanish class and then transferring the information to English.

## Staff

María Elena Hernández has been a Spanish teacher for 18 years. She holds a master's degree in Foreign Language Education from Nova

Southeastern University and became National Board Certified in World Languages other than English in the year 2005. She is a DREAM (Direct Recruitment Efforts to Attract Minorities) Team leader and has worked with high-poverty urban and rural schools in Puerto Rico. She has received Teacher Mini-Grants and an Impact II Disseminator Grant from The Education Fund.

## Materials & Resources

Rulers, glue, markers and construction paper for student graphs, timelines and collages. Research is conducted on the Internet and in biography books from school and public libraries.

## Standards

The project incorporates social studies issues with math and language arts strategies used in the FCAT.

Foreign Language:  
FL.A.1.2.2., FL.A.3.2.2.,  
FL.C.1.2.2., FL.D.2.2.3.,  
FL.E.1.2.2.

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Maria E. Tavel-Visiedo





# Superintendent's Urban Principal Initiative

The Superintendent's Urban Principal Initiative (SUPI) is one of the nation's most multi-faceted, comprehensive leadership development programs that identifies, prepares and inspires a cadre of teachers and administrators to become assistant principals and principals in hard-to-staff secondary schools in Miami-Dade County. Seeded by a Teachers and Teaching Initiative (TTI) Grant from the Wachovia Foundation, SUPI was created in 2004 through a partnership between The Education Fund and Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). Its intent—to address the shortage of experienced leaders in the district, particularly in challenging secondary schools.

One of the unique features of the program is the selection process, which requires applicants to apply in school teams of a teacher-leader, assistant principal (AP) and principal. Each year, 13 three-member school teams are selected to complete a rigorous 12-month professional development program and leadership portfolio aligned to the Florida Principal Leadership Standards. The school principal serves as the team leader/mentor, helping to prepare APs to become principals and teacher-leaders to work as APs, while at the same time further strengthening their own capabilities.

Online leadership assessment and training modules, professional development led by nationally recognized experts, training in and developing Action Research studies, coaching by retired M-DCPS administrators, and participation in professional learning communities (PLCs)

all prepare participants for a nine week internship which culminates the year-long professional development experience to prepare school leaders.

During the internship, the teacher becomes the AP, the AP takes over for the principal and the principal takes a special assignment at the district. Participation during the summer in the National Institute for Urban School Leaders sponsored by the Harvard Principals' Center caps the year. SUPI has demonstrated its success in reaching its goals for APs and teacher-leaders—increasing their competency and interest in becoming a school administrator in the district's most challenging schools.

Thus far, 93 educators have graduated from the program: 20 of 39 APs (52%) who completed SUPI have been hired as principals and 12 of 26 teacher leaders (42%) are now working as APs.

Funded through grants provided by



Dissemination efforts made possible by the U.S. Department of Education



## Evaluations

In 2005-06 and 2006-07, National Consultancy TCC Group evaluated the nine highly respected school leadership development programs receiving the Wachovia Foundation Teachers and Teaching Initiative Grant (TTI). Both years TCC found that SUPI exceeded the Wachovia Leadership Cluster mean on all seven post-program outcomes measured.

For the 2006-2007 cohort, WestEd measured SUPI results against 14 standards of success and innovation developed for educational leadership programs by the U.S. DOE Office of Innovation and Improvement. WestEd found that SUPI achieved a "medium" rating on three of 14 and a "high" rating on 11 of 14 standards.



# SUPI Teams' Action Research Questions & Analyses

The results of the action research conducted by the 13 SUPI teams in 2007-2008 are highlighted on the following two pages. More details on their research studies, along with the PowerPoints each SUPI team completed, are available, with contact information, at www.educationfund.org. Click on programs and then SUPI to access their research PowerPoints.

## THE STEPS TO ACTION RESEARCH

1. The SUPI leadership team formulates a list of school challenges, expressed as questions; e.g., what is the impact of a study skills program on student achievement?
2. The team completes a literature review of current research on the chosen topic. This relevant research situates the team's questions among the whole body of work developed in that area.
3. Groups formalize their research questions, choose instructional interventions, design and implement their studies, using such data-collecting tools as interviews, student work logs, surveys and assessment data.
4. Groups analyze the data collected, reach conclusions, formulate policy recommendations and determine future action steps.

### Carol City Middle

**Question:**  
How will teaching to eighth-grade students' identified multiple intelligence (MI) strengths increase their achievement in social studies?

**Analysis:**  
After teachers identified and addressed individual student's dominant multiple intelligence (MI) learning preference, students in the MI class out-performed their classmates in the traditional classroom by as much as 10 percent, as revealed in a comparison of the October, 2007 and April, 2008 District Interim Assessments.

*Mr. Nelson Izquierdo, Jr., Principal  
Mrs. Tricia M. Fernandez, Assistant Principal  
Mrs. Mesha Campbell-McLemore, Teacher Leader*

### Carol City Senior High

**Question:**  
How will 11th grade science teachers' use of incentives improve student attendance and achievement in 11th grade science?

**Analysis:**  
The results showed that incentives were an effective way to increase attendance and recorded an increase on science scores in the tri-weekly assessments during the attendance incentive period. After the incentive promotion, however, attendance and scores declined dramatically.

*Ms. Kim W. Cox, Principal  
Mr. Aaron Roberts, Assistant Principal  
Ms. Kathy Alexander, Teacher Leader  
Dr. Patricia Grimsley, Professional Partner*

### Charles R. Drew Middle

**Question:**  
How will the introduction of hands-on activities and the use of integrated technology affect overall motivation and performance in the eighth-grade science classes?

**Analysis:**  
Student performance on interim assessments after the infusion of hands-on activities and technology reflected an average increase of 16 percent, while performance before the infusion showed only a three percent increase, thus supporting the literature that found if technology applications enable student collaboration, it tends to result in improved achievement. (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1996).

*Dr. Gwen S. Coverson, Principal  
Dr. Andy Granados, Assistant Principal  
Ms. Darlene Mooney, Professional Partner*

### Hialeah Miami Lakes Senior

**Question:**  
How will the Small Learning Community (SLC) teaching approach affect attendance and performance in 9th grade reading at Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior High School?

**Analysis:**  
Teacher surveys and district attendance reports revealed that student attendance and behavior improved as a result of the 9th grade Trojan (SLC) Academy, while academic performance, based on a comparison between the first and third Reading Benchmark assessments, showed

an overall improvement in all four clusters: Words & Phrases by 33 percent; Main Idea & Purpose, 8 percent; Comparisons, 13 percent; and Reference & Research, 2 percent.

*Ms. Karen Robinson, Principal  
Ms. Lisa Garcia, Assistant Principal  
Mr. Stephen Papp, Teacher Leader*

### Homestead Middle

**Questions:**  
How will the introduction of best science practices increase 7th-grade students' science achievement in inclusive classrooms?

How will Professional Development for the Inclusion Teachers improve achievement for 7th-grade Special Education Students?

**Analysis:**  
The study concludes that using the inclusion model in a science classroom proved successful for both teachers and students. Results show a continuous improvement on the assessments of ESE students as well as general education students, leading the administration to extend the co-teaching model to other content areas.

*Mr. Nikolai Vitti, Principal  
Mr. Earl Burth, Assistant Principal  
Mrs. Ronda Y. Cobb, Teacher Leader  
Mr. F. David Halberg, Professional Partner*

## Lake Stevens Middle

### Question:

How will the use of virtual inquiry-based learning (science gizmos) increase science achievement and improve attitudes toward science of lower achieving 8th-grade students in an urban middle school setting?

### Analysis:

Researchers found that students demonstrated growth in science achievement, and more students completed their homework when they used the science gizmo program, which provided teachers with progress reports to monitor and make adjustments based on individual needs.

*Dr. Derick McKoy, Principal*  
*Ms. Isolyn T. Hillhouse, Assistant Principal*  
*Ms. Eliut Villalba, Teacher Leader*  
*Ms. Thelma Davis, Professional Partner*

## Madison Middle

### Question:

What will happen in sixth grade when small learning communities are implemented in an urban middle school?

### Analysis:

A school climate survey completed by sixth-grade students indicated 64 percent of students believe adults at their school are helpful, up from 22 percent in 2007. Students improved their National Percentile Rank (NPR) on the FCAT Norm Referenced Test (NRT) in math by 6 percentage points when comparing 2007 and 2008 although reading percentiles declined over this period by 5 percent. Overall, the implementation of small learning communities positively impacted the sixth-grade students.

*Dr. Tonya S. Dillard, Principal*  
*Ms. Gina Spicer, Assistant Principal*  
*Mr. Dexter Saunders, Teacher Leader*

## Miami Edison Senior High

### Question:

How will the infusion of an integrated science curriculum in 11th grade science classes increase student achievement and performance on the science benchmarks?

### Analysis:

The use of the integrated science curriculum yielded promising results in how to meet student science needs. By focusing on four specific strands, students within the lowest 40 percent improved their performance through in- and after-school interventions, and student scores on the FCAT Mock Assessment Test increased an overall percentage of 15 percent. The success of the curriculum can be contributed to thorough planning, engaging and high-interest hands-on activities, committed teachers, consistent progress monitoring, and administrative reviews.

*Dr. Jean E. Teal, Principal*  
*Mrs. Sandra Pelham, Vice Principal*  
*Ms. Sacha T. Challenger, Teacher Leader*  
*Ms. Thelma Davis, Professional Partner*

## North Miami Senior High

### Question:

How will the infusion of a teacher-developed integrated science curriculum in the 11th grade increase student achievement and performance in targeted integrated science strands?

### Analysis:

During the intervention period using integrated curriculum, special education students demonstrated small gains from one progress check to another, but demonstrated the highest overall gains. ESOL students showed a 5 percent gain at the end of the intervention period, while overall gains by students in Advanced Placement and IB course tracks were small when compared to their counterparts.

*Mr. Carnell A. White, Principal*  
*Ms. Annette Y. Burks, Assistant Principal*  
*Mr. Luis B. Solano, Teacher Leader*  
*Ms. Willa Young, Professional Partner*

## Robert Renick Educational Center

### Question:

How will collegial coaching between special education educators (teachers, paraprofessionals, and student services) affect teacher efficacy and impact their attitudes toward teamwork?

### Analysis:

Survey results indicated that initially the participants felt intimidated to work in groups for a number of reasons, including a deficit of knowledge in a specific content area and a lack of access to communication. By the final survey, results indicated that most participants found working with others and participating in reflective practices was beneficial and most likely will have a lasting effect on their teaching practices.

*Dr. Allison Harley, Principal*  
*Mr. James DeWitt, Assistant Principal*  
*Ms. Gladys Jones, Teacher Leader*  
*Ms. Cecilia Hunter, Professional Partner*

## Westview Middle

### Question:

How will the implementation of individualized mentors increase selected 8th grader's attendance and academic achievement?

### Analysis:

Results show that 85 percent of the students in the individualized mentor program increased the amount of time spent in school and decreased the amount of days absent. The additional time in school helped 66 percent of the participating students to increase academic achievement based on the School Improvement Zone post test.

*Ms. LaVette Hunter, Principal*  
*Ms. Carla Patrick, Assistant Principal*  
*Ms. Althea Dixon-Hooks, Teacher Leader*

## Young Men's Academy for Academic and Civic Development at MacArthur South Senior High School

### Question:

How will the implementation of specific writing strategies in the writing camp and writing across the curriculum impact 8th- and 10th-grade students' writing achievement?

### Analysis:

Students were slow to take advantage of the opportunity to improve their writing in an intensive writing camp guided by the language arts teacher. Some resisted being pulled out from their elective classes for the special writing sessions. Nonetheless, data indicate that 17 percent of the 8th-grade students and 1 percent of the 10th-grade students increased their FCAT writing scores as a result of the specialized attention.

*Dr. David K. Moore, Principal*  
*Cynthia Valdes-Garcia, Assistant Principal*  
*Alex Morales, Teacher Leader*  
*David Halberg, Professional Partner*

## Young Women's Academy for Academic and Civic Development at Jan Mann

### Question:

How will school wide implementation of The Positive Behavior Support Program (PBS) coupled with Differentiated Instruction (DI) increase ninth-grade students' academic achievement in reading?

### Analysis:

The implementation of the PBS program resulted in an improvement of positive behavior among 9th-grade students, as evidenced by the decline of referrals and suspensions, but there was no improvement in academic grades in reading. The impact of DI did not appear to increase the 9th-grade students' academic achievement in reading.

*Ms. Deborah Carter, Principal*  
*Ms. Yolanda Green, Assistant Principal*  
*Mr. Robert Cooper II, Teacher Leader*  
*Dr. Betty Woodson, Professional Partner*

# 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 MetLife fellows from 14 nationwide affiliates. Each affiliate is composed of highly accomplished teachers which are Nationally Board certified and/or have advanced education degrees. These teachers conduct practitioner based research in order to better inform their practice and improve student achievement. The mechanism ensures that education policy-making is informed by teachers so that the realities of schools and classrooms come alive for policy makers. 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, observation, 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.

The university advisor to the program is Dr. Jill Farrell, director, Ph.D. and Ed.S. Curriculum and Instruction programs at Barry University in Miami and the coordinator is Mark Rosenkrantz, a Nationally Board Certified art teacher who is also a TNLI MetLife Fellow. The program includes monthly meetings within a learning community focused on intensive training in conducting action research, readings and discussions on teaching strategies and practices, as well as how to influence education policy decisions.



## Topics Researched

Monographs of the research conducted over the past few years by The Education Fund's TNLI MetLife fellows, along with their contact information, are posted on The Education Fund's Web Site at [www.educationfund.org](http://www.educationfund.org). Previous topics researched include service learning, looping ESE students and visual thinking strategies. A wide-range of additional studies conducted by MetLife fellows from other affiliates of the Teachers Network can be found at [www.teachersnetwork.org](http://www.teachersnetwork.org). Abstracts of the action research conducted for the 2007-08 year are listed below and on the following page.

### How will literacy-focused learning centers impact kindergarten students' letter recognition abilities?

#### Rationale

As a kindergarten teacher who receives no additional support to teach a class of 23 students who speak three different languages, my primary challenge was to facilitate the literacy learning centers to be an effective, orderly learning environment for the entire class, while recognizing and addressing diverse and distinct individual student needs.

#### Intervention/Data & Tools

A study by the Los Angeles Unified School District showed pre-kindergarten students using the LeapFrog SchoolHouse Literacy Center made a 74 percent gain in early reading skills, surpassing children who received standard literacy program materials. My students used similar learning centers on a daily basis, rotating every 20 minutes between four learning centers, comprising phonics, writing, computer and teacher-directed instruction. I worked with students on letter recognition, letter sounds, phonics and other activities. Students used Web sites such as [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com)/ [clifford](http://clifford) and [www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com)., and a listening center reinforced students' recognition of letter sounds and key words on tapes.

In addition, I incorporated a peer-tutoring program with fifth-grade students. Each tutor had a group of four students that they worked with on letter recognition and letter sounds using letter and picture cards.

#### Analysis/Results

I used a teacher-created test on letter recognition and sounds at the beginning of the action research and subsequently tested students each week. In the beginning of the year, diagnostic and DIBELS Test scores determined more than half of my students needed extra help learning the alphabet. Nine weeks later, all students showed improvement in knowledge of letter naming on both tests. Gradually, my students began to learn at a higher rate, and I saw that as my students began to read, they also began to work independently. I also observed an increase in my ESOL student's letter and sound recognition because of small group activities and the learning centers. I realized that using learning centers is not easy for the students or teacher, but with practice and patience, we all showed improvement.

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## How can an after school music program be used as an intervention to promote character building? What are the implications of this program on the behavior, feelings of self-efficacy and academic success of at-risk students in this program?

### Rationale

I observed in my music classes that many at-risk students, particularly the emotionally handicapped (EH) and English as Second Language (ESL) students, were having difficulty expressing themselves and grappling with self esteem issues, as evidenced by their classroom behavior, attitude toward learning and overall academic performance. In creating an after-school music program, I hoped to build a character-building program that would improve these students' lives.

### Intervention/Data & Tools

I believed the discipline involved in playing in a steel drum band would transfer to each student's school work. The structure of this instrument is "user-friendly," with the note placements in logical order, so students commonly learn how to play the steel drums quickly, giving them a sense of accomplishment. I implemented free after-school steel pan lessons three to five days a week for 1.5 hours per session. Nineteen students participated and were observed over a six month period. Data to assess the program included homeroom teacher and student positive-action surveys, taped recordings and interviews.

### Analysis/Results

The results showed that student's feelings of self-efficacy in playing a music instrument increased from 10 to 100 percent. Even though there was no significant improvement in student conduct scores, there were gains in students' attitudes towards school, teamwork, and musicianship. Students learned not only how to read music and play the instruments, but how to listen to one another, follow instruction, work as a group, and maintain self-discipline. There was also a significant gain in parent involvement.

### Recommendations

The current disciplinary action of prohibiting an at-risk child from participating in activities beneficial to their success should be re-examined. This study revealed that students' self-concepts and perceptions did not always correlate with those of the homeroom teachers. Therefore, there is a need to further explore the impact of teacher perceptions of their students as it correlates with actual student in-class conduct, academic performance and student-teacher interaction.

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## What will happen to relationship behavior in school when pre-teen girls participate in a small counseling group focused on relational aggression and relationship building?

### Rationale

Little girls are often taught to "be nice" and suppress their anger. As a result, they may resort to covert forms of bullying and psychological abuse and, at times, even physical forms of aggression which can escalate as they grow older. I was surprised as a teacher and counselor to witness how prevalent these behaviors surfaced between pre-teen girls who considered themselves best friends. I designed a forum where the girls would become aware of the hurtful and emotional destruction that can result from Relational Aggression (RA), as defined by Dr. Nicki Crick as "emotional violence and bullying focusing on damaging an individual's social connection within their peer group." Girls, while generally less aggressive than boys, are more likely to use cliques and social exclusion to ostracize their peers.

### Intervention/Data & Tools

I implemented counseling over a nine-week period for twenty girls in three groups (six from fourth- and 13 from fifth-grade) They took part in reflection, journaling, role-playing, reading of related literature and lyrics, and open discussions. Incentives such as sisterhood

wristbands were provided to build unity and camaraderie. The girls were taught to recognize negative or inappropriate friendship behavior as they became more familiar with what an appropriate friendship should look and feel like. Throughout the sessions, the students completed an ongoing array of surveys of self-discovery, including a counselor-developed pre- and post-test.

### Analysis/Results

Through the surveys, I witnessed the evolution of the girls as they examined their own behaviors and were made aware of appropriate friendship and self-efficacy patterns. Many of the girls who had experienced, witnessed or taken part in some form of aggression against a "best" friend, became "nicer" in their relationships.

### Recommendation

This study recommends that policy makers make concerted efforts to intervene and prevent relational aggressive behaviors with small group and individual counseling for troubled girls. Funding should be allocated for research-based programs that incorporate emotional intelligence and for a bibliotherapy library accessible to parents, teachers, and students.

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## Question: How Will the Use of Literature Circles Affect Third Grade English Language Learners' Attitudes toward Reading and Improve their Reading Comprehension Skills?

### Rationale

From previous experience I realized that most students today are not motivated to read. In this action research project, I implemented literature circles in a third-grade classroom with the research focus on English Language Learners Level 4 from Central and South American countries, a group that did not perform at grade-level in reading comprehension on the 2007 FCAT.

### Intervention/Data & Tools

Over the years, research has illustrated that motivating children to read is an essential part of helping children learn to read (Peralta-Nash & Dutch, J., 2000). The literature circles I implemented shared three basic elements (diversity, self choice, and student initiative) with a previous study (Daniels, 2002). Ten students from a class of 20 participated. The sessions were 30 minutes long, three times a week. Students were assigned reading leadership roles such as Word Wizard, Note Taker, Connector and Luminary Literary. These students were exposed to daily modeled scaffold mini-literature circle lessons. Throughout the study, I conducted numerous interviews; had student and parent pre- and post-reading-interest inventories, literature circle evaluations, monthly reading test and collected work samples. The results found a positive gain in reading among the at-risk students. They read more, shared their viewpoints, and selected more books related to their homeland.

### Analysis/ Results

Tests revealed the students gained a measurable growth of 10 percent in reading comprehension. Students enhanced reading skills, learned from each other, gained self confidence, improved oral and written communication and had fun in a socially interactive environment. Students were observably more enthusiastic, attentive and responsible for their own learning in this setting. The 2008 FCAT showed that eight of the ten participating students received a passing score of three and higher.

### Recommendations

School districts must be willing to allow grade level teachers preparation time to assess and plan properly for literature circles, and purchase quality culturally-sensitive literature at appropriate reading levels.

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