

Meeting the Needs of Culturally Diverse Learners In Family and Consumer  
Sciences Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills Classrooms

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A Special Project

Presented to

Dr. Gordon Martinen

Heritage College

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree of  
Masters in English Language Learners

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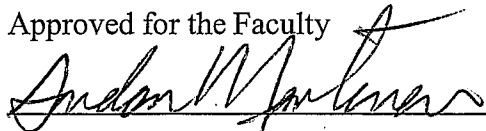
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## FACULTY APPROVAL

Meeting the Needs of Culturally Diverse Learners In Family and Consumer Sciences

Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills Classrooms

Approved for the Faculty

 \_\_\_\_\_, Faculty Advisor

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent of cultural and linguistic diversity among students in Family and Consumer Sciences, Graduation Reality and Dual Skills (GRADS) classrooms. Additionally, it was designed to explore how GRADS teachers met the needs of their diverse learners. Seventeen GRADS teachers in seventeen different Washington school districts participated in this research study by completing a four part survey.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

Even though the teen birth rate was on the decline over the past decade, the United States in 2003 ranked highest in teen pregnancy among industrialized nations (Fact, 2005). The U.S. birth rates for all teens of racial/ethnic groups were at an all-time low, Hispanic teens had experienced the smallest decline, as shown in Figure 1 (The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2007). “Between 1991 and 2003, the birth rate for Hispanic teens declined by 22%, while the birth rate for non-Hispanic black teens declined by 45% and the birth rate for non-Hispanic white teens declined by 35%” (Fact, 2005).

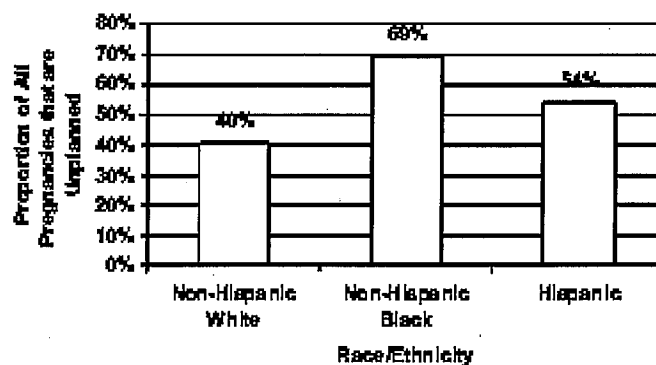


Figure 1. Teen Birth Rates Unplanned 2001.

From The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy website.

Retrieved February 8, 2008 from <http://www.thenationalcampaign.org>.

Many teen mothers came from impoverished households, finding financial resources replaced the necessity of education. To escape the poverty, pregnant

and parenting teens would succeed “if schools implement the appropriate aid and programs, these teens will have a better chance of scholastic success” (Ducker, 2007). Senator Patty Murray attended a celebration in Tri-Cities, Washington that assisted teen parents and their children with a non-profit outreach program called Hope Home. Senator Murray (2004) went on to say:

Every child deserves a chance to succeed in a healthy, safe environment, no matter where they grow up or who raises them ... This bill would help every child and young adult get a fair shot at a promising future. The status quo leaves vulnerable children behind and that is absolutely unacceptable in the United States of America. (p. 2)

While most people did not condone teen pregnancy or parenting, the fact remained that Title IX guaranteed them equal educational opportunity.

Changed demographics in the U.S. had the most impact in the nation’s school system. The increased dramatic demographic shift in the United States was most apparent in the educational sector. Classrooms across America were filled with an unprecedented mixture of racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity. The large influx of minority and immigrant students had increased 65 percent throughout the past decade (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). Demographers predicted the trend of immigrants continued throughout the next half a century, estimated one in three school aged youth will be English language learners (ELL) by year 2043 (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). The number of students designated as limited

English proficient, many of whom were immigrants, had risen dramatically over the past decade, and represented more than 100 different language groups by 2043 (Lessow-Hurley, 2003). Approximately 14 percent of the nation's school age youth spoke a first language other than English at the turn of the century (Brown, 2007).

The diversity of American society had increased and the need for every educator to have a basic understanding of diversity issues increased but only 10 percent of the teachers were racially and or ethnically diverse (Chaika, 2006). Christopher Cross, former president of the Council for Basic Education, "estimates that unless the trend is reversed, people of color will represent just 5 percent of the teaching force in the future" (Chaika, 2006).

With the changed demographics across the nation, teachers needed to develop cultural sensitivity and instructional skills needed to work effectively in a multicultural classroom. Additionally, teachers needed to prepare students to live in a multicultural world. Minimal research had shown the extent of diversity typically experienced in a Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills (GRADS) classroom. Furthermore, no information had been found regarding strategies implemented by Family and Consumer Sciences educators within the GRADS class and the perceived effectiveness with multicultural learners and teenage parents.

### Background for the Project

Accommodations for the growing number of culturally diverse learners in the classroom had created a challenge for Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) educators. However, for teachers who dealt with teen parents who were physically, emotionally, cognitively, and socially challenged, this created another obstacle in the classroom. In 2003, the number of live births to teens was 421,626 (Fact, 2005). Out of these 421,626 teen mothers, it was estimated that 59 percent dropped out of school after giving birth (Fact, 2005).

### Statement of the Problem

In 2002, President Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in an effort to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers (Essex, 2005). This act was designed to strengthen accountability required by the states for all school sectors. "Assessment results and state progress objectives must be broken out by income, race, ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficiency to ensure that no group is left behind" (Essex, 2005). Schools that failed to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) as shown in testing over time; corrective action took place (Essex, 2005). The president signed NCLB into law which held schools accountable for all students. The No Child Left Behind act addressed a top-down approach. In response to the NCLB mandate, school administrators were required to hold accountability for teachers and close the achievement gap.

Due to the growing number of ethnicity diverse and teenage parents in the public school system, implementing effective education program to closing the achievement gap was eminent. If teachers, administrators, and school districts refused to adapt to the new generation of students, communities and society faced an influx number of drop outs, thus, not productively contributing to society. The goal behind the study was to analyze the data gathered from Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills instructors in the state of Washington to determine whether they were meeting the needs of diverse learners in the classroom.

#### Purpose of the Project

Accommodating the needs of culturally diverse learners challenged teachers across the United States. "While the number of students with limited proficiency in English has grown exponentially across the United States, their level of academic achievement has lagged significantly behind that of their language-majority peers" (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). Therefore, the purpose of the project was to research the diversity in the Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills classrooms across Washington state, evaluate the strategies implemented, and the GRADS instructors perceived effectiveness of the strategies with multicultural learners and teenage parents.

#### Delimitations

The study included Washington State Family and Consumer Sciences Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills (GRADS) educators. The participants were

Family and Consumer Sciences educators who taught GRADS students in the 2007-2008 school year. The researcher was the Hudson's Bay High School Family and Consumer Sciences teacher, and was responsible for teaching the Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills program.

### Assumptions

The assumption of the research was that the Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills instructors involved in the study were a convenient sample that reflected the population of GRADS instructors in Washington. The researcher also assumed that all school districts taught the GRADS class, used the state approved curriculum. In addition, the researcher assumed that the educators teaching Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills in Washington state were trained, competent, and only taught the approved curriculum.

### Hypothesis

The teen parents in Washington state who were in the Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills programs and received culturally responsive teaching in the program had a better chance of success than those not in the GRADS program who did not receive culturally responsive teaching. Additionally, English as a Second Language (ESL) students and teenage pregnancy and parents specifically showed a correlation in minimal offered programs and high school dropout.

### Significance of the Project

With the steady number of teen pregnancies among the ethnic/racial group, non-white, the rise of minority students in the classroom, one in ten students represented English Language Learners population, and the demands of the No Child Left Behind Act, closing the achievement gap, teachers faced unique challenges in meeting the needs of their learners. Teaching all students effectively required educational approaches that were adapted to individual needs, and to build on individual strengths. Without educating teen parents on proper parenting techniques, the cycle of teen pregnancy continued and the achievement gap did not close.

### Procedure

The project was approved on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007 by Bill Oman, Hudson's Bay High School Principal. The researcher gained a copy of the Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills instructors email addresses in the state of Washington from Peggy McNabb on Monday October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The list that was received dated back to 2001, so the researcher sent out a preliminary email on Tuesday October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007 to determine if the addresses and teachers names were accurate and whether they were willing to participate in the survey. Fifteen of the forty emails came back undeliverable. The researcher then searched each school on the Internet to see who was currently the GRADS instructor and called each school to get the accurate email address. Those fifteen undeliverable emails were resent. All

Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills instructors who replied were willing to participate in the survey and assist in any way possible. On Friday November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007, the surveys were sent out to all 17 GRADS instructors in Washington State. The survey contained in the Appendix was used in the study. The surveys were produced by the researcher, then reviewed, edited, and approved by four instructors who had an expertise in Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills; all were previously trained to teach GRADS but some were currently teaching other subjects.

#### Acronyms

AYP. Academic Yearly Progress

ELL. English Language Learners

ESL. English As A Second Language

FCS. Family and Consumer Sciences

GRADS. Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills

NCLB. No Child Left Behind



## CHAPTER 2

### Review of Selected Literature

#### Introduction

Despite a recent decline in adolescent pregnancy rates, 421,626 adolescents became pregnant each year in the United States (Fact, 2005). This alarming rate was the highest among all industrialized nations in 2003 (Fact, 2005). One-fifth of those who gave birth, 83,000 15-18 year old teenage females, gave birth to a second child before the age of 18 (Schelar, Franzetta, & Manlove, 2007). Washington state ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> in the United States for teen births in 2004; 17% of live births were the result of second pregnancies.

Although, over the past decade the number had steadily decreased, teen pregnancy and sexual activity among adolescents persisted, as shown in Figure 2, despite programs that attempted to delay early sexual activity and pregnancy.

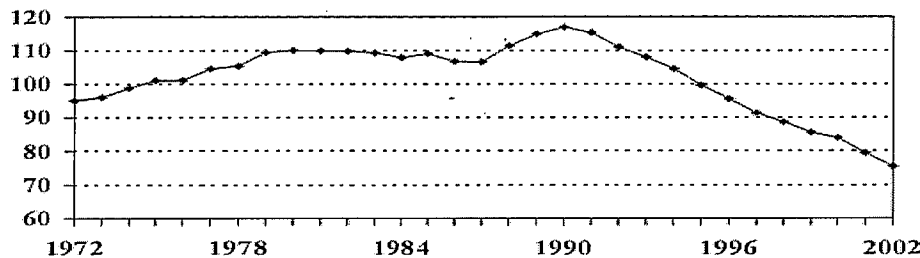


Figure 2. Teen Pregnancy Rates in U.S., 1972-2002.

From The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy website.

Retrieved April 17, 2008 [http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/national-data/pdf/pregrate\\_Oct2006.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/national-data/pdf/pregrate_Oct2006.pdf).

Community based comprehensive sex education programs improved teens knowledge about pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, the risks and consequences of sexual activity (Fact, 2005). One program that was found to delay childbearing and out-of-wedlock births until years later was programs that offered high quality child care such as a Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills class (Fact, 2005).

Academic yearly progress weighed so heavily on individual school districts, some failed to remember that one of the four principles under the No Child Left Behind Act was “an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proved to work” (Essex, 2005). The method that had proven to work, required teachers to realize that curriculum in all subject areas must be “grade-level appropriate, based on content standards and learning outcomes” for individual student needs (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). Additionally, in-services and trainings needed to be offered to strengthen teachers in the areas of language acquisition, diversity, effective teaching strategies (Crawford & Krashen, 2007), and sheltered instruction (Echevarria et al., 2004).

#### Teen Pregnancy and the Law

In June of 1976, Congress enacted Title IX Educational Amendments of 1972 which affected all school systems receiving federal monies (Essex, 2005). This legislation determined that pregnant girls and young mothers could not be expelled from school on the basis of pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition.

Additionally, this act required schools that provided separate programs for pregnant girls and young mothers to have programs comparable to those of regular students, and required that such special programs be attended on a voluntary basis (Essex, 2005). These federal requirements enabled an increased number of school-age mothers and pregnant girls to continue with school during pregnancy and following their delivery. A pregnant girl remained in regular class during her pregnancy and returned to class after her delivery (Essex, 2005).

Adolescent pregnancy and childbearing was the subject of considerable concern for generations. In response to this problem, many laws were enacted to support at-risk students such as, Title IX and NCLB. School districts established teen parent programs in effort to meet the needs of their learners, following Title IX. School-based teen parent programs provided an opportunity for early intervention, before a teen dropped out, 59 percent of those who became mothers before the age of eighteen dropped out of high school (Ducker, 2007). Startling statistics showed a gap in educational attainment between those at-risk students, parenting teens and their peers. Teenage parents tended to have lower grades, higher failure and drop-out rates, more frequent absenteeism, and lower chances of entering or completing college (R. Gottlieb, personal communication, 2007). Using schools as the center of intervention linked pregnant and parenting students to critical services before they became alienated from the educational system and their educational goals (Ducker, 2007).

In Washington state, a program was adopted in an effort to meet the needs of diverse learners; the Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills program was created for pregnant and parenting teens (GRADS, 2006). The program focused on work, family foundation skills, economic independence, and skills that lead to completion of high school (GRADS, 2006). The GRADS program curriculum was developed at the local level using the Family and Consumer Sciences Education Frameworks and the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Vocational and Adult Education curriculum, which was established in 1980 (GRADS, 2006).

The Graduation Reality and Dual Skill (GRADS) program became an in-school Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) instructional and intervention program. The GRADS program targeted pregnant and parenting teens, included males and focused on knowledge and skills related to a positive self-image, child development, parenting, and economic independence (GRADS, 2006).

The Graduation Reality and Dual Skill curriculum set forth the competencies and competency builders that represented what students needed to know to be effective teen parents. There were two kinds of competencies represented in the GRADS curriculum, process competencies which represented lifelong skills, and content competencies that focused on specific area of study (GRADS, 2006). The GRADS program had proven valid and effective through the U.S. Department of Education's Program Effectiveness Panel (GRADS,

2006). The program dealt with “all pregnant and parenting teens, male and female, grades 7-12, in urban, suburban and rural communities” (GRADS, 2006). Additionally, the effectiveness of the GRADS program was evident as stated in the program guidelines (2006):

... data showing that pregnant and parenting teens enrolled in the program are more likely to remain in school during pregnancy and after childbirth; are more likely to obtain early prenatal care; are less likely to deliver low birth weight babies; are likely to increase their knowledge of positive parenting practices; and are less likely to have a subsequent pregnancy while still in school. (p. 4)

The teenage pregnancies statistical highlights and detriments impacted financially on the educational sector. With the steady decline in teen pregnancy this yielded substantial savings for taxpayers. It was estimated that from 1991 to 2004 there were 6,776,230 teenage births in the United States, which cost taxpayers 161 billion dollars, for thirteen years (Hoffman, 2006) as shown in Figure 3. The consequence of early childbearing negatively impacted teen parents, their child and society. Each experience after birth varied considerably. Certainly, some parents lived their lives extremely different from the norm, while others undoubtedly faced much worse. If the teen birth rate had not declined between 1991 and 2004, “it is estimated that the annual costs of teen childbearing to taxpayers would be \$15.8 billion rather than \$9.1 billion” (Hoffman, 2006).

<b>OUTCOME MEASURES</b>	<b>1st Birth at Age 17 or Younger</b>	<b>1st Birth at Age 18-19</b>	<b>1st Birth Age 19 and Younger</b>
<b>Lost Tax Revenue</b>	<b>\$4.89</b>	<b>\$1.43</b>	<b>\$6.32</b>
Income & Sales Taxes (Mothers)	\$0.92	-\$0.65	\$0.27
Income & Sales Taxes (Fathers)	\$1.71	\$1.45	\$3.16
Income & Sales Taxes (Children)	\$2.26	\$0.63	\$2.89
<b>Public Assistance (Mothers)</b>	<b>-\$0.95</b>	<b>-\$2.62</b>	<b>-\$3.56</b>
TANF	-\$0.72	-\$1.26	-\$1.98
Food Stamps	-\$0.45	-\$0.91	-\$1.35
Housing	\$0.22	-\$0.45	-\$0.23
<b>Health Care Costs (Children)</b>	<b>\$0.95</b>	<b>\$0.98</b>	<b>\$1.92</b>
<b>Child Welfare (Children)</b>	<b>\$1.84</b>	<b>\$0.46</b>	<b>\$2.30</b>
<b>Incarceration of Sons of Teen Mothers (Children)</b>	<b>\$1.90</b>	<b>\$0.17</b>	<b>\$2.07</b>
<b>Total Annual Cost (Billions)</b>	<b>\$8.63</b>	<b>\$0.42</b>	<b>\$9.06</b>

Figure 3. Public Sector Costs of a First Birth to Teen Mothers.

From The National Campaign To Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy  
website. Retrieved April 17, 2008

[http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/costs/pdf/report/2-BTN\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/costs/pdf/report/2-BTN_Summary.pdf).

The progress the nation had done in reducing early childbearing benefited our  
society as a whole.

As a result of the cost to taxpayers, the importance of early intervention  
and attainment for teenage parents became significant for educators and  
administrators. Through complying with Title IX and No Child Left Behind  
school were reaching out to pregnant and parenting teens, school officials helped  
break the cycle of teenage pregnancy (Essex, 2005).

### Meeting the Needs of All Learners

In every city across the United States, schools served an array of students with varied mental and physical abilities; in fact “approximately 20% of young people experienced mental health problems” (Greenberg, Weissberg, O’Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnik, 2003), English language learners represented one in ten students in the U.S. (Crawford & Krashen, 2007) and students who engaged in multiple high-risk behaviors represented “30% of 14-17- year-olds” (Greenberg et al., 2003). Some of those students struggled academically and were disengaged for a number of reasons and others were academically successful and committed to school (Greenberg et al., 2003). Research showed that when developmentally and culturally appropriate classroom instruction and application of learning to everyday situations (Brown, 2007) was applied, it enhanced students’ connection to school. Evidence also showed that making this link from school to home and motivating students to stay in school was beneficial to the success of the student.

The demands on teachers with new legislature to “implement effective educational approaches that promote academic success, enhance health, and prevent problem behaviors have grown” (Greenberg, Weissberg, O’Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnik, 2003) exponentially. Lawmakers, researchers, and many child advocates had inundated schools with well intentioned prevention programs “that address such diverse issues as ... dropout, family life, health, morals, multiculturalism, pregnancy, service learning, truancy, and violence” (Greenberg

et al., 2003). Programs such as GRADS, was sufficiently linked to the State Standards and individual school missions, but without strong leadership and support from school administration the program unlikely existed.

Growing interest from policy makers and society as to student achievement had become an issue of great concern, and educational leaders across the state were consumed with the student academic performance requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Despite parents and educators aspirations for perfect schools, what evolved from NCLB Act were successful schools ensured by a state mandatory test. "Successful schools ensure that all students master reading, writing, math and science" (Greenberg et al., 2003). Every mandate of NCLB was designed "to force the people who run our schools to shape up, work harder, raise expectations, and stop 'making excuses' for low test scores, or face the consequences" (Crawford, 2006). The educational reform known as No Child Left Behind was contradicted through several studies that documented the significance of social and economic factor which determined a child's academic progress (Crawford, 2006). "In general, students drop out less if they come from wealthier families, live with both parents, have parents who monitor their homework, have lived in the United States longer, or inhabit a more print-rich environment" (Crawford, Krashen, 2007).

The overall goal behind standardized-based educational reform had been for every student including diverse learners to achieve high standards (Crawford,



2006). As a result of No Child Left Behind Act, the standards-based reform provoked changes in state testing and graduation requirements (Crawford, 2006). Graduates from Washington state were required to test in mathematics, reading, sciences and writing; the class of 2014 would have to pass the Washington Association State Learning (WASL) to graduate with a high school diploma (GRADS, 2006).

Additionally, NCLB included English language learners (ELL) into states' accountability for schools who received Title III funds (Crawford, 2006). Holding ELL students to the same standard as their native English-speaking peers contradicted the ideology of *Lau v. Nichols* (Crawford, 2006). Additionally, in *Lau v. Nichols* it was determined that for students who do not speak English, "there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum" (*Lau vs. Nichols* 1974). Educational equality had been reduced to equalizing test scores. President Bush best addressed inequality in school reform as "... unfair to hold disadvantaged children to rigorous standards. I say it is discrimination to require anything less – the soft bigotry of low expectations" (Crawford, 2006).

Research showed that teacher expectation had a major effect on students' achievement (Giambo & Szecsi, 2005). Teachers in the United States, most of whom were Caucasian, tended to have lower expectation for low-income students and students of color than the Caucasian students (Brown, 2007). African

American, Native American and Hispanic groups performed significantly worse than their peers on every measure of school success (Brown, 2007). However, research suggested that the effects of poverty played a much larger role than teachers expectations (Brown, 2007). High expectations helped students break out of the self-fulfilled prophecy of internalized low expectations and achieve success.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century society expected schools to offer more than academic learning, to educate youth on broader challenges, how to be life long learners. Unfortunately, the educational world took a hit with NCLB and standardized tests (Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnik, 2003). "Today's schools are expected to do more than they have ever done in the past, often with diminished resources" (Greenberg et al., 2003). School-based prevention program such as GRADS, were most beneficial in meeting the needs of individual learners when coordinating social, emotional, and academic learning together (Greenberg et al., 2003). The successful way to reinvent education began by involving all parties in the process, not through a top-down approach. The education reform did not wait until more teachers of color were hired, or until white educators were comfortable with the idea of educating all children, or until all educators were highly qualified (Brown, 2007). Ideally with No Child Left Behind, all teachers were trained in second language acquisition, English as a second language methodology, and culturally responsive teaching to properly educate linguistically

and culturally diverse students (Herrell & Jordan, 2004). Educational achievement improved when teachers learned how to draw on the cultural and language strength of their students, and truly met their learning needs (Brown, 2006).

### Culturally Responsive Teaching

Throughout the nation, teachers were confronted with literally hundreds of decisions when working with English Language Learners (ELLs). With increased immigration, the traditional classroom had changed from English-only to Bilingual Education. Bilingual education was best described as “the use of students’ native language to accelerate English-language development ... receive content-area instruction in both languages” (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). Furthermore, English-only was referred to as submersion, “for providing ELLs no special help in overcoming the language barrier, was common before the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 and the Lau v. Nichols decision of 1974” (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). English Language Learners (ELLs) represented about one in ten elementary and secondary students, estimated 5.1 million ELLs in the U.S schools (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). The number of English Language Learners had been estimated to increase to one in three ELL students by the year 2020, as shown in Figure 4 (Kelly, 2007), which transformed the demographics of American schools. To respond to the growth, teaching and learning needed transformation, not just more course work but a new innovative learning structure.

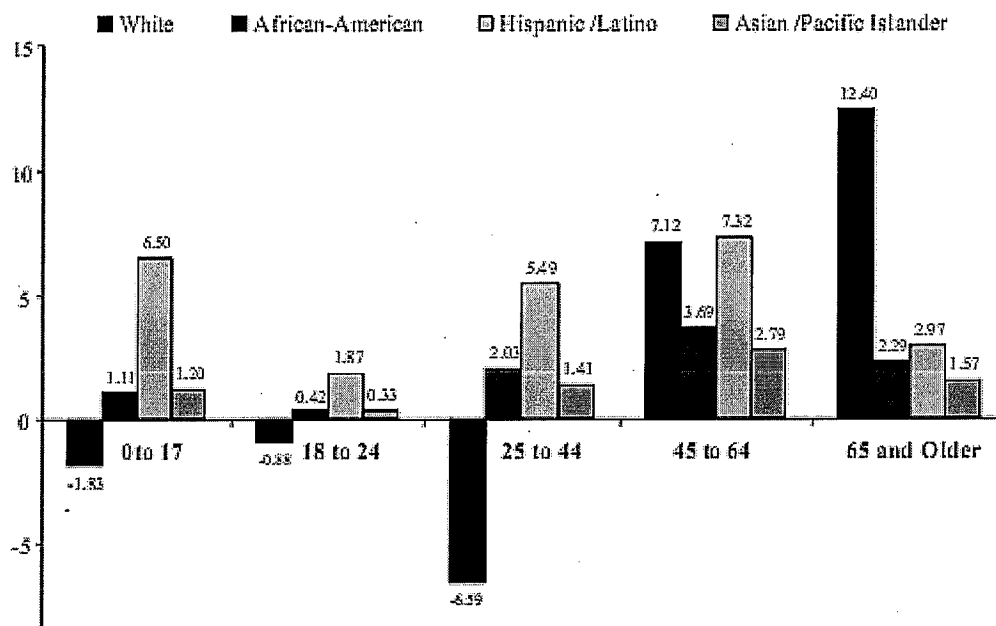


Figure 4. Projected Change in U.S. Population by Age, Race, Ethnicity.

From the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. (2005). Facts at a glance.

Retrieved October 30, 2007 from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

American schools continued to be challenged when administration tried to recruit qualified staff to serve the needs of all students, not just English Language Learners. Meeting the standards of NCLB Act by finding highly qualified educators to teach became difficult when “only 11 percent of ELLs teachers are certified in bilingual education and 18 percent in English as a second language” (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). Finding qualified teachers in math, special education, English and many other subject areas had also become an arduous task (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). With the increased number of immigrants, inexperienced educators undoubtedly faced English Language Learners in their

classroom. Educators who attempted to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners without proper knowledge and education negatively impacted the children (Crawford & Krashen, 2007).

Ideally, all teachers would have been trained in second language acquisition, English as a second language methodology, and culturally responsive teaching to properly educate linguistically and culturally diverse students (Echevarria et al., 2004). Ideally, scientifically based methodology would be represented in a well planned and produced lesson plan, one that connected students' own knowledge, culture, and life experiences with the new information being taught (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). This process allowed learning to become meaningful and relevant to the child.

Effective teaching included concrete language objectives which supported school districts and state learning standards, along with accommodations for grade level expectations (Echevarria et al., 2004). Objectives assisted in narrowing down the complexity of the lesson to a few significant concepts that underlined effective teaching practices (Echevarria et al., 2004). Some concepts were: lesson preparation, content objectives, language objectives, content concept, supplementary materials, adaptation of content, and meaningful activities (Echevarria et al., 2004). Effective teaching required strategic and thoughtful planning of both the material and knowledge of students' learning in order to ensure success among all students. Undoubtedly, preparation, relationship with

students, and classroom management techniques were inextricably linked with classroom success of a teacher (Tovani, 2004). Effectiveness in teaching, however, would only be assessed by actually teaching. For learning to be meaningful and relevant to the students, appropriate motivating materials and activities were carefully planned to foster real-life connection of concept being taught (Echevarria et al., 2004). Traditionally, when planning lesson around a specific concept the authors Echevarria, Vogt and Short (2004) stated:

consider the following: (1) the students' first language (L1) literacy, (2) their second language (L2) proficiency, (3) their reading ability, (4) the cultural and age appropriateness of the L2 materials, and (5) the difficulty level of the material to be read. (p. 56)

Additionally, an effective teacher previously built background knowledge activating students' prior experiences and related the material to them. Building background knowledge required a rapport with the students in order to analyze the requisite knowledge that must be processed in order to understand what was being taught (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). "Since students learn at different rates, effective teachers plan academic enrichment and remediation opportunities for students ... the teacher's knowledge of the students, it is possible to offer alternatives to a student or a small group of students" (Stronge, 2002). Teachers who successfully employed a variety of strategies reached more students because they tapped into several learning styles and student interest (Stronge, 2002).

English language learners deserved teachers who had cognitive awareness that curriculum must be grade-level appropriate, based on content standards and learning outcomes, not a one-size fits all model (Kendall & Khuon, 2005).

### Summary

The instinctive responses to the kind of tasks teachers were faced with daily were learned as children in our educational experience, not in college. Habits of teaching and learning were so deeply rooted in society, that any hope of school reform had to fundamentally change the idea society had grown accustomed to. No institution had become more deeply entrenched in habitual behavior than the educational system. New foundation needed to be laid in order for reform to succeed. Reform began when those educators who were dedicated to the struggle for equality began talking about a different kind of teacher. One who delivered a statement about his or her own passion of culture and embraced the children's culture as well.

## CHAPTER 3

### Methodology and Treatment of Data

#### Introduction

The United States, and specifically Washington state was observing high teenage pregnancy and English as a Second Language (ESL) rates. The question was raised of whether or not the Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills (GRADS) program met the needs of culturally diverse learners. Additionally, the researcher was curious about the quality of instruction offered within the GRADS programs to English Language Learners (ELLs) and Non-ELL students in Washington.

#### Methodology

The study asked for data on (a) the racial/ethnic diversity of students in GRADS class, (b) strategies employed by Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills teachers along with effectiveness, (c) teaching practices altered when teaching diverse students, and (d) background information on the GRADS teachers.

The research design used in this study was the self-report. This design involved requesting information by survey from Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills instructors in Washington state. The data were used to determine whether the GRADS curriculum was taught effectively, meeting all students needs.

#### Participants

The method used to survey the participants was a convenient sample of seventeen Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills instructors who were surveyed



taught in different high schools, in various cities throughout Washington. All the teachers were female and had been teaching for an average of 22.3 years, ranging from two years to 33 years. They were all currently teaching GRADS class and had a child care facility on-site at the high school.

### Instruments

In order to gather information on the diversity within the classroom and gain greater insight about the experiences of teachers in diverse GRADS classrooms, the researcher created a four part survey questionnaire. The questionnaire focused on closed-form questions with a few open-form questions. The survey was based on concepts related to diversity, strategies suggested for English Language Learners and the effectiveness, and practices altered when teaching diverse learners. Each survey had clear directions preceding the questions. The surveys was produced by the researcher, then reviewed, edited, and approved by four instructors who had an expertise in Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills; all were previously trained to teach GRADS but some were currently teaching other subjects.

Part A of the survey inquired information about total number of students enrolled in 2007-2008 school year, number of students transported from another school in the district, and the total number of ELL in the GRADS program. Part B included race/ethnic classification questions concerning the GRAD students. In part C, participants were asked to reflect on strategies employed within the

GRADS classroom and rank the effectiveness and times used of each strategy. On the scale of times used, participants rated the strategy with the following scale: 1 (never use), 3 (occasionally use), and 5 (use on a regular basis). Participants rated effectiveness with the following scale: 1 (not effective), 3 (somewhat effective), and 5 (highly effective). The strategies were recommended to be used when ELL students were being taught (Herrell, A. & Jordon, M. 2004). Part D consisted of a list designed to identify classroom practices altered when meeting the needs of diverse learners. The participants rated their teaching practices on times altered by a scale of 1 (never altered), 3 (sometimes altered), and 5 (always altered). Part E of the survey included demographic questions about the participants, gender, age, years taught, experience teaching GRADS, bachelor and masters degree, amount of training participants had in working with diverse students, and GRADS training. Additionally the survey included two open-ended questions that inquired about participants views on English-only education and multicultural classrooms.

In order to enhance the validity of the study, the researcher piloted the survey four instructors who had an expertise in Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills; all were previously trained to teach GRADS but some were currently teaching other subjects. All participants provided feedback about directions, questions, and content covered in the survey. Modifications were then made to the survey.

### Design

The research design utilized in the study was self-report. Out of the seventeen participants surveyed fourteen completed the survey and returned it to the researcher. The validity was effected by teachers not understanding questions, asking for clarification, or omitting answers. Reluctant school districts provided an inaccurate account of all the Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills programs in Washington. Additionally, the validity of this study was also effected by the infrequent and inconsistent return of the surveys.

### Procedure

The researcher conducted a survey method study. The survey was produced by the researcher, then reviewed, edited, and approved by four instructors who had an expertise in GRADS; all were previously trained to teach GRADS but some were currently teaching other subjects.

On Friday November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007 the surveys were sent out to all 17 GRADS instructors in Washington state. The researcher slowly received the surveys throughout the next month, and received the final survey on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The researcher sent out three reminder emails to the seventeen participants on November 16<sup>th</sup>, November 30<sup>th</sup>, and December 7<sup>th</sup> 2007. As of December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007 the researcher collected fourteen surveys out of seventeen. The 14 surveys were collected by the researcher and kept anonymous.

### Treatment of the Data

The data were gathered from the questioners and compiled onto one final survey. The researcher used the Excel 2003 program to create graphs specific to the study. The results were calculated, and various graphs and results developed.

### Summary

The researcher used a survey method, four part questionnaire, in this study to research the effectiveness of GRADS programs in Washington. Data were collected by internet questionnaire. Fourteen of the 17 teachers responded to the questionnaire.

Multiple revisions of the survey were made to identify a model that best explained the variance in teachers' attitudes, practices, and experience. Variables that contributed significantly to the model included; open-mindedness, number of pregnant teens taught, diversity, number of in-service programs attended, age, whether teacher was educated, and whether teacher was willing to teach diverse learners.

The study proposed to analyze the data gathered from Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills instructors in the state of Washington to determine whether they were meeting the needs of diverse learners in the classroom. Conclusions serve to validate the need for Family and Consumer Sciences teachers and Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills programs.

## CHAPTER 4

### Analysis of the Data

#### Introduction

The focus of this study was the instruction being taught in the Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills programs in Washington and the effectiveness of the curriculum for all students. In addition, the focus encompassed the need for more educational training when working with English Language Learners and teen parents.

#### Description of the Environment

The study began in the fall of 2007 and continued throughout the 2008 school year. The parameter of the study was the Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills program offered at various High Schools within Washington. The 17 participants were sent the survey, completed the survey, and then 14 returned the survey back to the researcher. The GRADS program was intended to feature pregnancy prevention that supported teen parents to complete high school and pursue higher education.

#### Hypothesis/Research Question

The results of the findings have shown a need for more education, funding within the Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills programs. While conducting this study, the researcher realized teachers were faced with unique challenges in meeting the needs of diverse learners and teen parents in the classroom. Teaching

all students effectively required educational approach that was adapted to individual needs and built on individual strengths which required time, funding and further education.

### Results of the Study

The Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills instructors who participated in study were experienced teachers on the whole, with an average of 22.3 years teaching. Over half of the respondents had 20 or more years of experience, two teachers had been teaching between five and ten years, and four teachers had taught less than five years. The respondents included 13 Caucasian and one Black teacher.

The researcher was surprised to find a large percentage of the group had minimal experience when working with diverse students. Twelve out of the fourteen responded "yes" they had training but training was limited to; workshops on motivating students, exchange students, Framework for Understanding Poverty, SET Training, anything affordable, SIOP, and special education class (Participants Survey). Unfortunately, only three of the fourteen participants had specialized training in diversity; one had Ethnic Minority Mental Health Specialist, and two had ESL endorsements.

Almost all the participants received GRADS training, thirteen to one. The participant, who had not received GRADS training, received her bachelors and masters in Social Work. In the state of Washington, to teach the Graduation,

Reality and Dual Skills curriculum one must attend the GRADS initial training.

For 2007-2008 student population within the Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills classroom was slightly diverse. The study consisted of a mix of races and ethnicity, totaling 320 pregnant or parenting teenagers. Among those 320 students, 12 were males and 299 were females. The White (42%) and Hispanics (38%) were the largest represented, the other culturally groups were less represented; Blacks (8%), Native American ancestry (8%), Asian background (3%), and Multiethnic background (1%). Roughly 3% of the students were English language learners, all information shown in Figure 5.

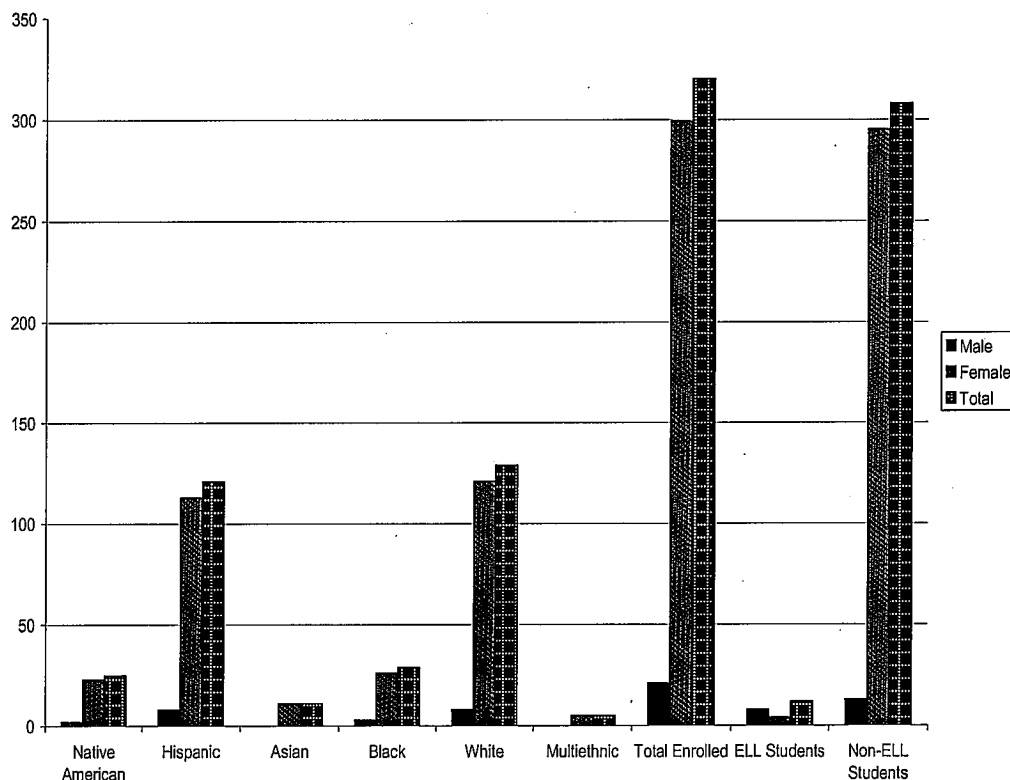


Figure 5. Student Enrollment Data.

The student enrollment data was a good representation of the current teen pregnancy statistics in the United States. With the diverse classrooms across Washington, it was imperative that FCS educators were prepared and met the needs of all the students.

Figure 6 identified teaching strategies and the effectiveness employed by Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills teachers. Once all the strategies were totaled, five strategies were rated as highly used and effective; visual aids (189), guest speaker (128), cooperative learning (111), and peer tutoring and alternative assessments (107). Overall, the strategies that rated lower were, field trips (90), role playing to solve real-life problems (84) and dual language alternative materials (77).

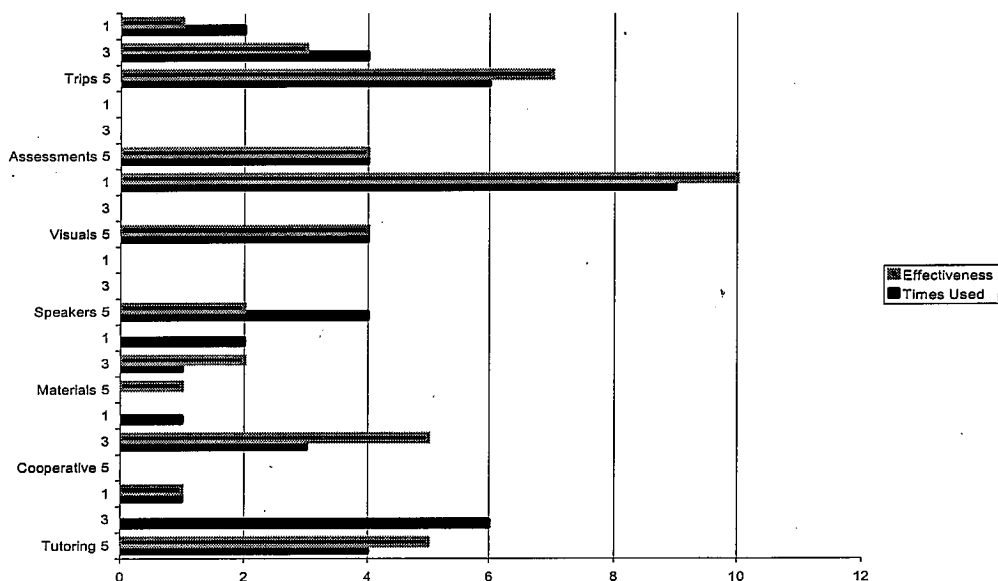


Figure 6. Strategies Employed by GRADS Teachers.



These seven teaching strategies that were suggested as effective ways to teach English Language Learners by Herrell and Jordan in the book, *Fifty Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners*. Visual Aids was the top strategy referred for educators to use, and the Family and Consumer Sciences teachers rated visual aids as the most used and most effective amongst all seven strategies. What was found by the researcher in figure 6 was that the more frequently used strategy the more effective it was. Some participants reported that financial limitations made some strategies such as, field trips and materials virtually impossible. Individual teachers were willing to try new strategies but either unable to because of money or time.

When addressing teaching practices altered when teaching diverse students, participants identified 16 practices, shown in Figure 7. All 14 GRADS instructors reported altered practices when working with diverse learners. The majority of the instructors, reported modifications on; instructions for assignments, strategies used, grading, time allotted, grouping students, communication, make-up work, and units taught. Fewer reported having made adjustments in; involvement with parents, classroom rules, time spent preparing lessons, standards, and motivating students.

### Findings

The data verified the need for more specialized training when working with students with diverse needs. The surveys revealed that the participants

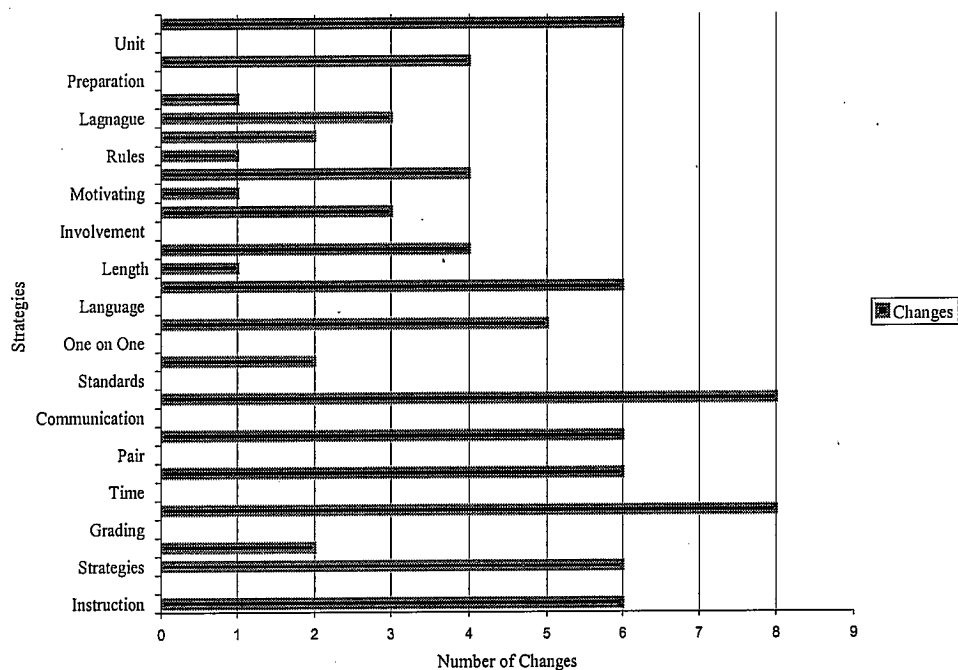


Figure 7. Teaching Practices Altered When Teaching Diverse Students.

wanted to implement different strategies and practices but funding, knowledge, or time limited their ability. Additionally, the data revealed that the Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills educators believed a multicultural classroom was beneficial; “good way for students to learn from each other”, “students self-esteem is built when they are given a chance to learn about their cultures ... it helps them see the connection of education to their personal history”, “we are all different and learn best from each other”, “resources don’t allow for segregation nor would it be appropriate”, and finally “we must remember that although most GRADS teachers are white, our students are a mix of many races we must reflect their many cultures in the classroom” (Participants Survey).

## Discussion

These findings provided valuable information about the amount of diversity within the Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills classrooms in Washington, as well as strategies used and effectiveness, including instructional and classroom practices altered. Additionally, the data revealed the education level, beliefs, opinions of GRADS instructors, and experiences in meeting the needs of diverse learners.

The overall demographics of Washington GRADS programs were 320 pregnant or parenting teens, with 42% White and 58% Hispanic, Black, Asian, Native American or Multiethnic. These 320 teen parents represented only 2% of the 15,630 teen parents in Washington (The National Campaign To Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2008).

The strategies and effectiveness employed by the 14 GRADS instructors were in alignment with what other research suggested, when working with diverse learners. As Echevarria, Vogt, & Short (2004, ¶82, 97) aptly phrased it, "... teaching students a variety of self-regulating strategies improve student learning and reading [...] Learning is make more effective when teachers actively assist students in developing metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies, those that promote self-monitoring, self-regulation, and problem solving."

The final figure represented teaching practices altered when teaching diverse learners. From the information in the figure alone the top two teaching

practices that were altered the most by the 14 Family and Consumer Sciences teachers surveyed were, time for instruction and communication altered. As Echevarria, Vogt, & Short (2004, ¶118) aptly phrased it, "English learners make more rapid progress in mastering content objectives when they are provided with multiple opportunities to practice with hands-on materials and/or manipulative."

The results from this study were in agreement with the expectation of the researcher. The researchers' hypothesized that teen parents who received GRADS support had a better chance of succeeding than those not receiving assistance. Only, 1/3 of the teenage parents receive a high school diploma (Family First Aid, 2004). Additionally, the number of minority and English as a Second Language students increased, the GRADS programs met this need and offered culturally diverse learning environments by adapting teaching strategies and practices.

These findings provided insight into the Family and Consumer Sciences GRADS classes across Washington. The study revealed the diversity which stretched across the nation was apparent in Washington. With 320 pregnant or parenting teens in the study, 58% were from nationalities other than White. Additionally, only 320 of the 15,630 (The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2008) 15-19 year old teen parents were surveyed in Washington. Unfortunately, only 2% of the teen parents were offered the support and services from the GRADS program.

There were 284 school districts in Washington and 17 had teen parent programs. Furthermore, from 1992 to 2000 there was a 30% decrease in teenage pregnancy in Washington (The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2008). With the implementation, success, and funding of the GRADS programs the number of teenage pregnancies would continue to decrease, as the trend had showed.

From this information alone, the researcher concluded that the majority of Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills instructors were attempting to diversify lessons taught, material read, and ways of communicating to benefit all ethnic groups. Additionally, this showed the researcher that more allotment for education would be beneficial, thus aligning with the hypothesis.

### Summary

The study was conducted on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007 in Vancouver, Washington. The researcher surveyed 17 GRADS instructors in Washington and 14 of the 17 replied to the survey. The researcher concluded from the information in the study alone, that the 14 GRADS teachers were meeting the needs of the 320 teen parents. The instructors were using teaching strategies to communicate effectively to all the students. Furthermore, the GRADS teachers altered teaching practices to best convey the meaning and lessons being taught. The researcher found teachers were willing to change teaching practices and strategies despite little diversity training. Additionally, many of the participants were open to

further education and training of school districts were willing to provide opportunities.

The classrooms across America continued to reflect the increased diversity of the United States population. The 14 Graduation, Reality and Dual- instructors in Washington offered a glimpse into their classrooms, in which students of all color gathered to learn. While this glance may not represent every high school Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills program in Washington, it represented a trend in effective teaching practices employed by exceptional teachers, despite the diversity of the classroom. As one teacher so realistically stated, "I believe it's important for people to be exposed to a variety of cultures at school, just like they are in real life" (Participant).

## CHAPTER 5

### Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Summary

Teens lived in an intense social network of like-minded peers. From their best friend, to many close friends, to acquaintances, teens lived in a world which adults seem less and less important. We know that peer pressure in the negative sense encourages teens to wear certain clothes, listen to certain music and encourages experimentation with drugs, alcohol, and sex. While peers may steer each other in the direction of self-destruction, they can also be influenced in the direction of positive behaviors. If adolescent peers achieved a level of comfort and trust that was difficult for adults to attain, it made sense for them to use the talent and expertise to influence each other.

Clearly, student learning was influenced by a multitude of skills gained in diverse settings, combined with life experiences, and the knowledge acquired throughout their educational experience. No single formula existed for student success. We can identify attributes, background characteristics and behaviors that contributed to success, but these were general guidelines and not a prescription for success. As educators, if we built an environment where student learning was based on a multitude of life experiences and expertise, we would have met the needs of all our students.

According to the results of this study, from the information alone, the researcher concluded that the majority of GRADS instructors were attempting to diversify lessons taught, material read, and ways of communicating to benefit all ethnic groups.

### Conclusions

The study consisted of a conveniently chosen sample of 17 Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills instructors in Washington. The instructors were asked to complete a survey consisting of a four part questioner regarding their opinions on, teaching strategies used and effectiveness, practices altered while teaching, experience and attitudes about the GRADS program taught. Fourteen of the 17 GRADS instructors responded, and data showed that the majority of instructors diversified their lessons, but continuing education and funding were needed to benefit all. The educational sector was designed to prepare students for life after high school, college and real-life situations, thus, learning to work within a classroom of different ethnic background can only better prepare our students.

### Recommendations

The study on meeting the needs of culturally diverse learners within the GRADS classroom was supported throughout the research and data collected. In addition, the figures collected, researched, sustain the need for education to be diversified throughout our nation. Classrooms across America should include the



current effective teaching strategies, practices, funding for implementation, and continuing education needed for education to benefit all students

The Graduation, Reality and Dual Skills curriculum of the future needs to be more applicable to all pregnant and parenting teens. Teens who become parents face unique challenges in school and life. The information being taught needs to address teens developmental and educational needs, how to grow into a parents, and developmental and emotional needs of their children. It is our choice as a society and educators whether or not to help teenagers become better parents, and promote emotionally and physically healthy early development of their children. With the change in demographics in the United States school and the heighten number of minority teenage pregnancy; providing an education that meets the needs of every ethnic group will benefit our nation for generations to come.

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## APPENDIX

### GRADS SURVEY

#### Part A: The racial/ethnic diversity of students in GRADS class

##### I. Student Enrollment Data

For this report count students who are enrolled in the GRADS program/Teen Parent class during the 2007-08 school year. In each category, count student only once. Fill in all blanks with a number. Example: 00, 09, or 19. (F = female, M = male, T = total number of students).

1. Total enrolled during 2007-2008 school year?      F \_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_
2. Total number of students transported to the GRADS  
program from another school in the District?      F \_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_
3. Total number of English Language Learners      F \_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_

##### II. Race/Ethnic Classifications:

Report the following information on your students. Fill in all blanks with a number. Example: 00, 09, 19. Count students only once. The difference between total enrolled (No. 1) and total of number 3-7 will be considered multiethnic.

1. Native American – origins in any of the original people of North America.  
F \_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_
2. Hispanic – a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban,  
Central and South American, or other Spanish culture origin.  
F \_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_

3. Asian or Pacific Islander – origins in the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands

(Includes China, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, and Samoa).

F \_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_

4. Black – origins in any racial group of Africa; not Hispanic origins.

F \_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_

5. White - origins in any of the peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East. Not of Hispanic origins.

F \_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_

Part B: Strategies employed by GRADS teachers along with effectiveness

Report on the students in your GRADS class and if you used the following strategies. Additionally, score each strategies on times used and effectiveness with the scale by circling a number that represents time used and effectiveness. On the scale of times used rate the strategy with the following scale: 1 (never use) 3 (occasionally use) 5 (use on a regular basis). Effectiveness scale rate the strategy with the following scale: 1 (not effective) 3 (somewhat) 5 (highly effective).

Strategies	Times Used	Effectiveness
Visual Aids	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Peer Tutoring	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Cooperative learning	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Using Alternative Assessments	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

### Dual Language Alternative Materials

	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Guest Speakers	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Field Trips	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Role Playing to solve real-life problems	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

### Part C: Teaching Practices Altered When Teaching Diverse Students

Report on the following information for your students. Circle the number indicating teaching practices altered while working with diverse students. 1 (never altered) 3 (sometimes altered) 5 (always altered).

Practices	Indicating Changes in Practice
The way you give instructions for assignments	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Strategies used to present information	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Grading/testing procedures	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Time allotted for assignments during class	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
How you put students in groups or pairs	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Communication and interacting with students	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Standards or expectations for your students	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Amount of time devoted to working with students one on one	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Choice of words or language used in the classroom	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Length and timing of lessons	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Involvement with parents	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Motivating students to learn or participate	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Classroom rules and discipline	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
How you handle inappropriate behavior	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Giving make-up work for students who are absent	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Time spent preparing lessons	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Subject matter, topics, and units that you teach	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Textbooks and choice of reading materials	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Homework assignments	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Part D: Background Information on the GRADS teacher

1. What is your race/ethnic classification based on the description in Part A?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many years have you been teaching? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many years have you been teaching GRADS? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is your BA degree in? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you have a Masters Degree? Yes Or No
8. What is your Masters Degree? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you have any training in working with diverse students?



Yes Or No

10. If so, what is your training? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you have any training in working with GRAD students?

Yes Or No

12. If so, what is your training? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you agree with English-only education? Yes Or No

14. Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you agree with multicultural classrooms? Yes Or No

16. Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_