

Teaching Tolerance Grant Proposal – Final Project for CEP 800

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Final Project - [Grant Proposal](#)

Narrative description of project.

I believe that introducing (digital) audiotexts that are representative of nondominant would accelerate acquisition of new vocabulary and increase reading fluency. The Teaching Tolerance curriculum, as implemented at the classroom level, would intuitively improve the project because the inclusion of culturally relevant texts in the classroom setting will deepen student knowledge and empower students to negotiate their pluralistic identities in multiple spaces more effectively. The preferred delivery method for students to listen to these audiotexts is through noise cancelling headphones that are wireless connected to an audio input, similar to the technology used in a 'silent disco'. This would create a mediatized academic experience, facilitating maximum engagement in these nondominant texts and increasing motivation to "read". Students who are excited to use educational technology to "read" will be more confident and have more positive perspectives on public education.

Objectives

- How do your goals and outcomes align with our program's vision?
 - My goal is to accelerate student acquisition of new vocabulary and improve student reading fluency by introducing students to short, culturally relevant (digital) audiotexts. Ideally, students will listen these audiotexts using noise cancelling headphones and 'silent disco' audio input. These audiotexts will be representative of nondominant cultures that are typically underrepresented in school curriculums. My goals and outcomes align with your program's vision to promote social justice at the classroom level, because engaging with texts that are representative of nondominant culture will encourage students to develop cultural knowledge and to recognize how to negotiate their multiple identities in multiple spaces. The preferred delivery method will drastically reduce 'noise pollution' and other distractions, creating a simultaneously shared and intimate listening experience.
- How are students involved in project planning or execution?
 - Students will be involved in the project planning or execution because students will be invited to submit suggestions for audiotexts to include in the classroom's digital library. Students will then engage with these high-interest, culturally relevant texts.

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- How is the project relevant to students?
 - Students with nondominant home cultures are underrepresented in literature that is required reading in district mandated curriculums. The glaring exclusion of texts that are representative of their nondominant home culture leads to negative attitudes about school and disinterest in the curriculum, which in turn widens the achievement gap. This project is relevant to students because will engage with texts representative of nondominant cultures, which will deepen cultural knowledge and help students recognize how everyone has a pluralistic identity. The inclusion of these texts will provide affirmation to students who previously believed that larger society did not value their experiences, improving attitudes about school and interest in content taught at school. Students will become empowered to embrace their multiple identities, all the while acquiring new vocabulary and increasing their reading fluency.

Demonstrated Need

- Who will be served by this project?
 - All students have the potential to be served by this project, but the students who will benefit most are those who currently do not read or write at grade level (as demonstrated through standardized assessments like the Scholastic Reading Inventory). Students from nondominant home cultures are overrepresented within the segment of the student population that does not read at grade level.
- How does the project fill a clear gap in the school's capacity to serve students?
 - The school provides an eBook component that allows students to listen to district-mandated literature, which means that students do have some opportunities engage with audiotexts. However, students have few opportunities to listen to culturally relevant texts that will supplement their understanding of vocabulary terms or literary concepts. This project will create opportunities for students to supplement their understanding, empower students to embrace their multiple identities, and deepen cultural knowledge in a meaningful way. The preferred delivery method, noise cancelling headphones and 'silent disco' type audio input, will allow all students to take advantage of an audio accommodation without being a distraction or detriment to others.

Sustainability and Support

- What is the commitment from a leadership team?
 - The district has a universal school improvement goal to address disproportionality (how nondominant segments of the student population are overrepresented in discipline data) and increase student literacy, as measured by lexile score. Members of the leadership team are invested in actively working toward the school improvement goal and would support any initiative that will lead to positive outcomes for students. This project, introducing audiotexts that are representative of nondominant cultures to the classroom and delivering the content through 'silent disco' technology, is an idea that is supported by research. Members of the leadership team are apt to implement pilot projects that are informed by research:

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- Research suggests that “reading” by listening to audiotexts develop all four language systems (Wolfson 2008) and that “reading” by listening improves student motivation to read (Moyer 2011).
 - Early research suggests that the preferred delivery method, a set of noise cancelling headphones receiving the same wireless audio input (like a ‘silent disco’), suggests the feeling of simultaneously participating in a collective media experience and experiencing media in isolation is positive (Barnett 2016)
 - A list of ‘best’ practices for culturally relevant pedagogy includes exploring personal histories, anchoring curriculum in the everyday lives of students, acknowledging membership in different groups, and developing an appreciation of diversity (Kozleski 2010).
- How is it expressed by various stakeholders (for example, administration, students, families and school resource officers)
 - Administration and school resource officers would be willing to pilot a program in one or two integrated service classrooms that will discourage behavioral issues and improve student literacy, which this project would accomplish. In an integrated services classroom, 20% to 40% of the student population has an individual education plan (IEP) or a behavioral intervention plan (BIP), a segment of the larger student population that overrepresents students from nondominant cultures.
 - Students and families have a personal stake in accelerating vocabulary acquisition and increasingly reading fluency. This project allows students to engage in high interest, culturally relevant audiotexts.

Results

- What are you trying to achieve and how will you report results?
 - I am trying to accelerate acquisition of vocabulary and reading fluency by supplementing student understanding of district-mandated curriculum with the teaching tolerance curriculum. Introducing(digital) audiotexts that are representative of nondominant cultures to the classroom and the preferred delivery method, noise cancelling headphones connected to a wireless audio input, will allow students to maximize their engagement. I will used mixed methodology to assess the efficacy of the project and I will report results through a data report.
- How will you demonstrate the impact of the project?
 - I will used mixed methodology to assess the efficacy of the project. I will use instructor generated vocabulary assessments, reading comprehension assessments, and standardized assessments (like the Scholastic Reading Inventory or the Istep). I will use student interviews, surveys, and observation to assess how the project impacted their understanding of nondominant cultures and their confidence in negotiating their pluralistic identities.

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References

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