INTEGRATING A CULTURAL FAIRY TALE IN A COLLEGE COURSE THROUGH

SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY

by

Robyn Le’An Strickland

Ed.S., The University of West Florida, 2016

M.A., The University of West Florida, 1995

B.S., Troy University, 1992

A dissertation submitted to the Department of Educational Research and Administration

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

December, 2018

Unpublished work © Robyn Le’An Strickland
The dissertation of Robyn Le’An Strickland, titled Integrating a Cultural Fairy Tale in a College Course through Sociocultural Theory is approved:

____________________________________________
Diane A. Bagwell, Ed.D., Committee Member Date

____________________________________________
Patricia Wentz, Ph.D., Committee Member Date

____________________________________________
Joseph Herzog, Ph.D., Committee Member Date

____________________________________________
Kathrine Johnson, Ph.D., Committee Chair Date

Accepted for the Department of Educational Research and Administration:

____________________________________________
Francis E. Godwyll, Ph.D., Chair Date

Accepted for the College of Education and Professional Studies

____________________________________________
William Crawley, Ph.D., Dean Date

Accepted for the University of West Florida:

____________________________________________
Kuiyuan Li, Ph.D., Interim Dean, Graduate School Date
Dedication

To Princess, April, Deliah, and Bubbles—

Fairy tales of dolphins in my life
Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the magical professors at the University of West Florida and their supernatural powers in helping me through this process. Cinderella may have had a Fairy Godmother, but I had Dr. Kathrine Johnson. She possessed the magical powers as chair and mentor in accomplishing this heroic task. I would also like to acknowledge my two children, Cory and Sean Gordon. They possess pure magic! I will have tales of these fine folks one day.
# Table of Contents

Dedication ................................................................................................................................. iv  
Acknowledgments ...................................................................................................................... v  
List of Tables ............................................................................................................................. vii  
List of Figures ........................................................................................................................... viii  
Abstract ................................................................................................................................... ix  

## Chapter 1: Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1  
  Background and Contextualization of the Issue ................................................................. 2  
  Problem Statement ............................................................................................................... 8  
  Purpose Statement .............................................................................................................. 12  
  Overview of the Theoretical Framework and Methodology ........................................... 12  
  Research Questions ............................................................................................................ 17  
  Assumptions of the Study .................................................................................................. 17  
  Delimitations and Limitations of the Study ..................................................................... 18  
  The Significance of the Study ........................................................................................... 19  
  Definitions of Terms .......................................................................................................... 20  
  Organization of the Study ................................................................................................. 21  
  Chapter Summary ............................................................................................................ 22  

## Chapter 2: Literature Review .............................................................................................. 24  
  Theoretical Framework ...................................................................................................... 25  
  Chapter Summary ............................................................................................................. 61  

## Chapter 3: Procedures and Methods .................................................................................. 63  
  The purpose of this action research study was to integrate a cultural fairy tale into a human  
  growth and development class (HGD) as one way to promote concepts of cultural diversity.  
  This study used the method of action research within the framework of Vygotskian  
  sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). ...................................................................... 63  
  Research Design ............................................................................................................... 64  
  Site Selection ..................................................................................................................... 69  
  Participants ......................................................................................................................... 70  
  Participant Selection ......................................................................................................... 71  
  Ethical Issues/Permissions .............................................................................................. 73  
  Data Sources ..................................................................................................................... 74  
  Description of Research Protocols/Instrumentation ....................................................... 77
## Data Collection Procedures ................................................................. 79
## Researcher Positionality ........................................................................ 82
## Ensuring Trustworthiness and Rigor ....................................................... 83
## Data Analysis Techniques .................................................................... 86
## Chapter Summary .................................................................................. 87

### Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings ............................................. 89

- Description of Participants ..................................................................... 90
- Presentation and Analysis of Findings ................................................ 91
  - RQ1 ........................................................................................................ 91
  - RQ2 ........................................................................................................ 98
  - RQ3 ........................................................................................................ 103
- Discrepant Data ..................................................................................... 110
- Analysis of Results ............................................................................... 111
- Trustworthiness of the Data ................................................................. 114
  - Action plan .......................................................................................... 115
- Chapter Summary .................................................................................. 116

### Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Suggestions for Future Research 118

- Summary and Major Findings ............................................................. 118
- Conclusions ......................................................................................... 125
- Interpretation of Findings .................................................................... 126
- Implications for Theory ....................................................................... 127
- Implications for Policy ......................................................................... 130
- Implications for Practice ..................................................................... 131
- Suggestions for Future Research ......................................................... 131
- Limitations and Reflexivity .................................................................. 132
- Chapter Summary ................................................................................ 134

## References ............................................................................................ 136

## Appendices ............................................................................................ 156

### Appendix A: Degree Plan .................................................................. 157
### Appendix B: Academic Program Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Rubric .... 159
### Appendix C: Approval Letter from the Research Site’s Institutional Review Board ...... 161
### Appendix D: National Institutes of Health Certificate .............................. 163
### Appendix E: Approval from the University of West Florida Institutional Review Board 165
Appendix F: Informed Consent Form

List of Tables

Table 1. Triangulation of Research Questions and Data Sources .......................................................... 77
Table 2. Demographics of Study Participants ......................................................................................... 91
Table 3. Comparison of Cross-cultural Themes in Cinderella and Little Burnt Face ....................... 92
Table 4. Identification of Cultural Origin and Student Responses ......................................................... 93
Table 5. Presentation/Activity 2 Cards by Theme: Tool ...................................................................... 111
List of Figures

Figure 1. Flow of participant responses for RQ1 using tools and sign.................................95
Figure 2. Flow of participant responses for RQ2 using cognitive processes in early childhood.102
Figure 3. Flow of participant responses for RQ3 using scaffolding and ZPD.........................117
Abstract

This purpose of this action research study was to identify another way to promote cultural diversity in a human growth and development course (HGD) at a college located in Northwest Florida. Under the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), all courses listed in general education degree plans assess student learning outcomes (SLOs). A class assignment guided by Vygotskian sociocultural theory and integrating a fairy tale was another way to promote diverse cultures. The participants in this study consisted of 25 students taking an HGD class. Data collection consisted of two in-class presentation/activities, cultural fairy tale “Little Burnt Face,” and reflective journaling of the teacher-researcher. The data obtained were then analyzed for cultural codes, themes, and categories. The teacher-researcher suggests future curriculum and instruction can be modified to identify ways to promote diverse cultures in HGD courses.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Human growth and development (HGD) is a course of study for many disciplines. Colleges and universities offer HGD as a required elective for specific programs including education, social science, and medical programs. In the fall of 2015, a college located in Northwest Florida changed the Associates of Arts degree plan to include HGD under Behavioral Social Sciences. This change required all professors teaching HGD to evaluate the course based on student learning outcomes (SLOs). Professors teaching HGD at this college are expected to meet SLO objectives as defined by the department. There is one textbook assigned to HGD courses to provide professors a way to present material. Despite the assigned textbook, professors are required to identify ways to promote diverse cultures in alignment with the SLOs. This study aims to identify another way of promoting cultural diversity in alignment with the assigned textbook in an HGD class.

Integrating literature is one instructional strategy used by K-20 teachers to meet curriculum goals and objectives set by educational institutions. Literature used as a supplemental tool can integrate related areas in course curriculum and instruction (Chaudhri & Schau, 2016; Chaudhri & Teale, 2013; Toom, 2013; Williams & Kolupke, 1986). This proposed study examined one approach of integrating the literary genre of cultural fairy tales in a college level HGD class. Fairy tales and fairy tale themes can also become supplemental tools to teach diverse cultures in HGD classes. Fairy tales can be the pedagogical facilitator identifying ways to promote concepts of cultural diversity in specific developmental stages in HGD classes (Ahi, Yaya, & Ozsoy, 2014; Hohr, 2013; Lushchevska, 2014; Lwin, 2016; Virtue, 2007; Virtue & Vogler, 2008). The primary purpose of this study was to integrate a cultural fairy tale into an HGD class to develop concepts of cultural diversity among college students. The objectives in
this study explored, developed, and described whether the use of a cultural fairy tale facilitated a way to promote diverse cultures from a global perspective as stated in one of the SLOs for the HGD class at this college. This study was significant because it contributed to the limited literature of integrating fairy tales in HGD courses. Secondly, the proposed study contributed to the limited literature using fairy tales as a supplemental tool for promoting diverse cultures in HGD courses. Lastly, the proposed study contributed to identifying ways to promote diverse cultures to meet SLOs at the college where this study took place. In summary, integrating cultural fairy tales may promote cultural diversity through differences and commonalities in a global perspective beyond the given text in a college HGD class.

Chapter 1 begins with an overall background and contextualization of the issue as it relates to an HGD course. The sections that follow describe the problem and purpose of the study. Its significance, the research questions, and justification of the study follow. Vygotskian sociocultural theory establishes the theoretical framework and action research supports the method. Sections of assumptions, delimitation and limitation, and key terms define the boundaries within the Vygotskian framework.

**Background and Contextualization of the Issue**

Accredited colleges and universities in the United States are required to provide programs that meet federal, state, and organizational standards for specific educational requirements (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). According to the SACSCOC (2011) and the Florida Department of Education (FDOE, 2016), accredited institutions provide quality courses to complete the education curriculum requirements toward associates of arts, associates of science, bachelors, masters specialist, and doctoral degrees. Students in pre-professional college programs take pre-requisite courses to apply for specific professional programs offered at that
institution or transfer to other institutions offering the same programs (FDOE, 2016; SACSCOC, 2011). Students who successfully meet pre-professional and general education courses at lower levels can move forward to specialized degrees in specific fields of study (FDOE, 2016; SACSCOC, 2011). Pre-professional and general education programs provide students with yearly academic schedules, detailing what courses to enroll in during the designated semester year. Providing academic plans ensures students meet all general education requirements and prepare for specific programs of interest. With the increased pressures of standardized testing formats and SLOs, evaluation of course materials for pre-requisite and general education courses may lead to successful preparation for the specialized end of course exams and specific SLOs (Korsmo, Baker-Sennett, & Nicholas, 2009). Documenting the quality and efficiency of programs and services at colleges and universities is one of the expectations of SACSCOC (2011) and the FDOE (2016).

The SACSCOC (2011) and the FDOE (2016) also support each institution’s mission via opportunities for faculty to teach and conduct research. Institutions are encouraged to provide learning conditions for students whose ideas can grow and sanction a curriculum that meets current standards. According to SACSCOC (2011), institutions are responsible for curriculum quality and effectiveness by qualified faculty members. Qualified faculty provides content in specialized course areas to meet the mission of the institution. Institutions continually review, reevaluate, and develop curriculum and instruction by qualified individuals. Institutions under the accreditation of SACSCOC and the leadership of the FDOE provide opportunities for faculty as teachers and professionals in their specific field to strengthen educational practices and student advancements (FDOE, 2016; SACSCOC, 2011)
Under Florida Statute 1012.98 (Title XLVII) School Community Professional Development Act, “all entities including the Department of Education, public postsecondary institutions, public school districts, public schools, state education foundations, and professional organizations shall coordinate systems of collaborative professional development” (School Community Professional Development Act, para. 1). The School Community Professional Development Act contains 12 areas including advisory subsections. The purpose of this statute ensures all entities participating in educational pursuits promote professional development goals and plans. Advisory subsection 3(b) communicates research goals to the school community. Under this subsection, professional development should focus on assisting the school community in allocating scientific based research projects. This section of the School Community Professional Development Act encourages the progress of student achievement through participation in learning activities that advance educational levels to the workforce (FDOE, 2016).

One methodology that creates a professional development platform where teachers can research, evaluate current teaching practices, reassess pedagogical methods, and design curriculum and instruction is action research (Hong & Lawrence, 2011; Mills, 2003; O’Connor, Greene, & Anderson, 2006; Rose, 2009). Teachers become researchers, presenting real-time prospects to refine instructional practices. Action research augments pedagogical alternatives for diverse instruction (O’Connor et al., 2006). Teacher-researchers can use their classrooms and in collaboration with other teachers to develop, reflect, and improve educational goals and objectives (Shabani, 2016; Tyler, 2013). Action research is a methodology that advocates authenticity and meaning for teacher-researchers and teacher collaborators when conducting studies in their classrooms (Hong & Lawrence, 2011; O’Connor et al., 2006; Shabani, 2016).
Current literature indicates when teachers implement, reflect, and provide thick description (Geertz, 1973) on research conducted in their classrooms and those of their colleagues, effective changes can take place (Hong & Lawrence, 2011; Rose, 2009; Rossouw, 2009; Shabani, 2016; Troudi & Riley, 1996). Action research when applied by teachers, grants opportunities for professional development by allowing teacher researchers to plan, act, observe and reflect on curriculum and instruction. Action research puts the teachers in control of their development as education professionals (O’Connor et al., 2006; Rossouw, 2009). This cyclical process of action research as a professional development methodology permits teacher researchers to construct their knowledge in specialized fields of study (O’Connor et al., 2006; Lewin, 1997/1939). Teacher-researchers are constructivists in experience and learning (Gundogdu, 2015).

The constructivist model based on Vygotskian principles of socio-cultural influence supports teacher-researchers using the methodology of action research (Altun & Yucel-Toy, 2015; Gundogdu, 2015; Kumari, 2014; Shabani, 2016). Constructing changes in teaching practices may allow students, as well as teachers, to make assessments about their knowledge and creation of learning environments (Altun & Yucel-Toy, 2015; Gundogdu, 2015; Shabani, 2016). Constructivists’ approach provides a framework for professional development in design and reflection of assessments, measurements, and interpretations of activities. Constructed material and evaluation tools reinforce standards of curricula and subject matter (Altun & Yucel-Toy, 2015; Kumari, 2014; Pitsoe & Maila, 2012). Review of the literature suggests that disciplines such as math, science, English, and social science have implemented constructivism as a theoretical model for curriculum and content knowledge (Lunenburg, 2011). The literature on action research implementing constructivist models recommends teacher-researchers in the
fields of education and social science promote cultural diversity practices (Ebersole, Kanahele-Mossman, & Kawakami, 2016; Howrey & Whelan-Kim, 2009).

In their study on culturally responsive teaching, Ebersole et al. (2016) had teacher participants evaluate their cultural background and implement a culturally responsive teaching plan. The implementation included developing curriculum on lesson plans, texts resources, and relevant literature to specific communities. Two major themes emerged within their teaching plans and developed around their classroom research: culturally responsive perspectives and culturally responsive activities. These two themes furthered educational objectives for all subject domains for pedagogical, culturally responsive teaching (Ebersole et al., 2016). The process of action research offers college faculty a device to improve pedagogical practices. The components of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting adopt a procedure to evaluate course material and sources that align with departmental outcomes. Teacher-researchers developing action research projects in the fields of education and social science often use the agent of fiction and non-fiction literature to build on current and future curriculum and specific SLOs (Boyatzis, 1992; Fernald, 1987; Meyerson, 2006; Sackes & Trundle, 2009). Literature as the instrument of integration can transport stories to any destination in the fields of education and social science. The fields of social science, especially psychology, have used fiction and non-fiction as an extension of theoretical association (Toom, 2013).

Research shows how studies in psychology using literature as supplemental material, disseminates and reinforces theorists’ perspectives and increases students’ understanding of people, places, and culture (Boyatzis, 1992; Fernald, 1987; Toom, 2013). Social science instructors have informally supplemented lists of fiction in classrooms in the hope of encouraging student discourse (Virtue & Vogler, 2008). One study investigated the
interdisciplinary development of integrated folktales weaving psychological issues into cultural themes (Virtue & Vogler, 2008). Specific subjects in psychology relating to literature and the process of course development led to the formation of a reading list and the proper outline of course content (Levine, 1984). Fiction and nonfiction lists can become pedagogical tools in diverse college classrooms.

A study conducted by Williams and Kolupke (1986), discussed curriculum design and planning. The researchers focused on educational objectives within the field of literature and psychology addressing student perception of society through culture, history, and philosophy. Psychological theory can be a valuable aid to literature and literature a useful aid to psychology (Hawkins, Agnello, & Lucey, 2015; Hurt & Callahan, 2013; Kelly, 2008). Meyerson (2006) conducted a study using children’s picture books through a constructivist approach to align theories of learning with development. A review of the literature conducted by Meyerson (2006) showed evidence of children’s literature among elementary and secondary students, but lack of empirical data on postsecondary students. Meyerson (2006) compared novelists to poets in relation to encapsulating theories with children’s books. Through the integration of children’s books, teachers can compare complex theories in a simple real form (Hawkins et al., 2015; Lushchevska, 2014).

The body of qualitative research is growing within the social science discipline. The field of Psychology has a long exchangeable relationship with the field of literature. The relationship provides a platform for both disciplines to share theory and narrative in the understanding of human qualities (Sackes & Trundle, 2009). A review of literature suggests a lack of qualitative investigation into specific college courses such as HGD and the use of a cultural fairy tale as an instructional tool for specific SLOs and faculty professional development (Fernald, 1987; Forte,
The context of an HGD course may influence the structure and emphasis of course design in the curriculum. A concern by McIntyre et al. (2001) dealt with the increased demographic of students taking the course and the best practices for teaching in a context that addressed all student needs. Human growth and development courses may benefit from more action research studies addressing both general and pre-professional students integrating the genre of cultural fairy tale material for specific SLOs. By doing so, they also meet federal, state, and organizational requirements. Professional development within the methodology of action research may provide the opportunity for college faculty to enrich personal growth and that of their students in diverse classrooms (Hine, 2013; Troudi & Riley, 1996).

**Problem Statement**

In 2015, a college in Northwest Florida added the course DEP2004 Human Growth and Development to the Behavioral Social Science category under General Education requirements (Appendix A). Historically, this course was required for Social Science, Education, and Medical program specialization majors and counted as a general elective. This course is a core prerequisite for students currently enrolled in the nursing and radiography programs. The college in which this study took place has yearly catalog descriptions of all courses approved for degree plans. The 2016-2017 catalog states the research-based HGD course covers the human lifespan. This course emphasizes the linear relationship of specific stages in the lifespan of humans. This course presents not only the healthy development of humans but also all factors that affect the lifespan.

Human growth and development is a cataloged course listed in colleges and universities in the state of Florida, is a sophomore level course, and falls under the guidelines of SACSCOC
This Behavioral Social Science course is part of the six credit hours required for an Associates of Arts Degree in General Education (Appendix A). According to the 2016 Florida Statutes, general education requirements consist of communication, mathematics, social science, humanities, and natural sciences (FDOE, 2016). Core courses must demonstrate high levels of critical thinking and competencies exhibited by students currently enrolled. Each institution must identify remaining general education requirements or prerequisite courses for a degree. All college courses in the Florida system are identified statewide including HGD courses and accepted for transfer to other Florida institutions (FDOE, 2016).

Due to changes at this college, from an elective to a general education requirement, HGD currently falls under the guidelines required of SLOs as a Social Science Discipline-Specific course (Social Science General Education Core Competencies SLOs, 2016). This research study addressed the SLO Level 2 (i.e., the targeted outcome) which states, “Identify ways to promote understanding of differences and commonalities within diverse cultures from a global perspective” (Appendix B). The college under study is an accredited institution; therefore, it falls under state legislation requiring all general education courses to adhere to SLOs mandated by the SACSCOC (2011) accreditation and FDOE (2016). The SACSCOC (2011) grants the opportunity of each institution to provide support and resources for growth and development of attending students. Programs under the guidelines of SACSCOC (2011) enhance the institution’s goals of providing ongoing structural programs.

Text-driven material by publishing companies provides research and theory in accordance to specific subjects but may fall short in aligning with the competencies of SLOs for student assessments (Hong & Lawrence, 2011; Korsmo et al., 2009). Hong and Lawrence (2011) claimed effective teaching based on the quality and evaluation of SLOs reflects diverse
populations and experiences of students in the classroom. In his book, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, Tyler (2013) asserted that textbooks are written, published for schools and colleges, and designed by specialists in specialized subjects. The texts reflect the specialist’s view on that given subject. He (i.e., Tyler, 2013) further disputed the educational delivery system of materials packaged to prevent teacher error. Professionals in the field of curriculum development may only see what publications present as the new systems of information. Textbooks recommended for specialized courses such as HGD may not meet the needs of diverse student populations required to meet general and pre-professional programs (McIntyre et al., 2001).

The problem is the textbook assigned to HGD courses at this college provides only one way to promote diverse cultures. The teacher-researcher in this study is responsible for identifying ways to promote cultural diversity. The curriculum change from an elective to a Behavioral Social Science course option in the 2015 academic year required an evaluation of all HGD courses according to the Social Science General Education Core Competencies (FDOE, 2016; SACSCOC, 2011). The HGD course at this college is text driven and provides students with access to the publishing company that provides the material for learning. Students are required to complete an end of course exam as a measure of meeting the learning outcomes. According to the required SACSCOC reporting forms from the department, of the 350 students who have completed this teacher-researcher’s HGD class, 12% of the students showed no to limited understanding of diverse cultures, 7% showed some understanding of diverse cultures, and 81% showed a mastery of diverse cultures as measured for the targeted SLO. Of the estimated 500 students who completed the teacher collaborator’s HGD class, 14% of the students showed no to limited understanding of diverse cultures, 8% of the students showed some
understanding of diverse cultures, and 78% showed a mastery of diverse cultures. It is a problem when 41% of the students show some or little understanding of diverse cultures after completing an HGD class (Appendix B). Accredited colleges and universities acknowledge quality texts of human development through the lifespan, but the subject matter may be limited contextually and not meet the multicultural perspectives of various populations (Korsmo et al., 2009). According to McIntyre et al. (2001), the course text should provide the study and practice for the multitude of disciplines requiring an HGD class. Hugg and Wurdinger (2007) suggested that education is sequentially programmed to meet participation standards. The application of theoretical knowledge to real-world situations cannot be measured by the ability to take notes and pass tests.

The measurement of the second level of the targeted SLO for this college specifies that students demonstrate mastery understanding of cultural diversity under the measurements of proficient, developing, and marginal (Appendix B). Mastery is measured numerically with proficiency ranking (3), developing (2), and marginal (1). To understand the level of competency about diverse cultures, an action based research study integrating the literary genre of a culture fairy tale (Ebersole et al., 2016) can explore the understanding of differences and commonalities for promoting global perspectives on diverse cultures (Appendix B).

Providing curriculum and instruction in the context of the classroom for a variety of students (nursing, general education, and education majors) often leads to using material found in other disciplines, such as literature (Cox, 2016; Howrey & Whelan-Kim, 2009; Lushchevska, 2014; Sackes & Trundle, 2009). Sackes and Trundle (2009) used children’s cultural literature to teach and introduce science. The researchers refer to content and science processes provided by children’s literature that evoked the child’s desire to learn. Children’s literature is a valuable tool, cultivating the presentation of nature and science (Ahi et al., 2014). Another study conducted by
Field (2003) used children’s literature to teach Mexican culture. By using the universals of culture as the foundation, the teacher integrated Mexican stories to build a curriculum for diversity studies. Cultural diversity within the pages of children’s literature illustrates lifespan development (Boyatzis, 1992; Zipes, 2012). Children’s literature especially in the form of folk and fairy tales explores connections to everyday life and practice through the lifespan. Categories of culture including social class, history, and geography broaden student possibilities of universal factors using categories of children’s literature.

Growing populations of diverse students and the need to individualize the curriculum and instruction that meet criteria for pre-professionals and general education programs (Howrey & Whelan-Kim, 2009) challenge teachers in the field of HGD. Integrating literature in an HGD course through theory and cultural practice may promote student knowledge and discourse in contextually diverse environments (Williams & Kolupke, 1986; Zipes, 2012). Adding a cultural fairy tale activity introduced another way to promote diversity in an HGD course.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this action research study was to integrate a cultural fairy tale in a college-level HGD class in Northwest Florida as one way to promote concepts of cultural diversity using action research within the framework of Vygotskian sociocultural theory.

**Overview of the Theoretical Framework and Methodology**

Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory framed this study (Cole & Wertsch, 1996; Liu & Matthews, 2005; Rezaee & Azizi, 2012; Shabani, 2016; Worthington & van Oers, 2017). Sociocultural theory provides a platform on the supposition that social contexts influence cultures and establish qualitative boundaries for ontological and epistemological investigation (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). Keaton & Bodie (2011) pointed out that objects of culture
continue in existence through language; language structures the social in constructivism. This communication is continuous in the types of social constructivist models today. The Vygotskian (1978) sociocultural worldview conceived the idea of material objects as cultural tools. The signs given to them as cultural artifacts can influence these cultural tools. Sociocultural theory is a theory based on social agreement and the information within a social context or collective (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978).

Past ontology (individual ways of viewing the world based on interpersonal experiences) underlined the human mind as containing all intellectual development at the ready and awaiting the social context (Liu & Matthews, 2005). Vygotsky (1978) proposed a path to intellectual development based on the child’s mind. Adaptive behavior and sign use are treated in a similar context but are separate entities. Vygotsky (1978) explained that to understand what specifies as a human is to understand levels, starting with the simplest form of practical intelligence. This process of practical intelligence through description and identification labeled what was specific to humans.

In this study, the constructs of Vygotskian theory were implemented to support the use of a cultural fairy tale to illustrate the cognitive process in early childhood development. The constructs of tool, sign/symbol, mediation, zone of proximal development (ZPD; Vygotsky, 1978), and scaffolding were used to support the fairy tale as a way to promote cultural diversity. Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of tool focused on the material tool for manipulation of use and future tense on symbolic function. The symbolic tool in his theory referred to the creation of music, math, writing, and language. Tools to Vygotsky (1978) were created socially and culturally by what nature provided. Historical tools were materials that were manipulated and became part of the culture. Symbolic tools contained the elements of language, both written and oral. Symbolic
tools could also be manipulated to teach culture and promote development. Symbolic tools became signs and symbols.

The construct of sign/symbols permitted development from intermental activity as speech to internal mental activity for private speech. Speech as signs provided the platform for cognitive development. Through observation and imitation, the child became a cultural representation (Vygotsky, 1978; 1997a). The construct of mediation allowed for an external mental conversation between the teacher and learner. Speech as signs and symbols created communication between individuals and allowed measurement of what types of mediation were incorporated into learning. Mediation also provided the basis for Vygotsky’s (1978) ZPD. The space and distance from the point of knowing and the space of cognitive growth were the outer edges of the ZPD (Solovieva & Quintanar, 2016). Through all constructs of tool, sign, mediation, and ZPD the teacher can build the scaffold to actual development level (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky did not use the word scaffolding. His implication of scaffolding showed inferences under the guidance of an adult or collaborator. Scaffolding was the idea of Jerome Bruner and part of his social constructivist theory (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Vygotsky’s (Wood et al., 1976) sociocultural theory became the template of Bruner’s theory on the ZPD. The use of scaffolding became interconnected with Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory and associations to the process of ZPD. The social context of the current study implemented the five constructs, tool, sign, mediation, ZPD, and scaffolding discussed in this section.

This theory was appropriate to use because of Vygotsky’s (1978; 1997a) foundation of theoretical constructs connected directly to early childhood cognitive development. The constructs of tool, sign/symbol, mediation, ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), and scaffolding are evidenced by studies conducted in diverse cultures throughout the world. Vygotsky’s (1978) constructs
were scaffolds in the process of understanding how cultural learning takes place in social mediums. The HGD course teaches about the cultural development of the child (Vygotsky, 1929).

One study conducted in a pre-school in England looked at a comparison of cultural literacies in both home and school (Worthington & van Oers, 2017). Using Vygotskian foundation constructs of tool and sign, the researchers found tools and signs learned at home were exhibited through play at school. The findings support Vygotsky’s sociocultural transference of tool and sign use in other social contexts.

A study conducted in Iran also used the construct of ZPD to determine the actual space of potential development on learners of English as a second language (Rezaee & Azizi, 2012). The scaffolding of the ZPD groups was dependent on the type of mediation by the teacher. Results indicated that the type of mediation used by the teacher significantly increased language skills among learners of English as a second language.

The theoretical framework incorporated five Vygotskian constructs in configuration with lifespan development of the individual. Through cognitive concepts of social context, historical materialism, language, and socio-cultural perspectives, the inclusion of cultural diversity, in theory, was reinforced. This reinforcement of Vygotskian (1978) constructs in practice granted exploration of cultural diversity using the qualitative method of action research.

Qualitative methods allow researchers to explore, develop and describe phenomena in natural settings (Berg & Lune, 2012; Kiener, Koch, & Gitchel, 2009). Additionally Mills (2003) stated, “qualitative research uses narrative, descriptive approaches to data collection to understand the way things are and what it means from the perspectives of the research participants” (p. 4). Action research supports professional development for teachers where
policies require the validation of practice (Helskog, 2014). Pedagogical reflections are centrally aimed at the continuous improvement of practice to meet student outcomes (Helskog, 2014). Educational research is held accountable with methods that can be validated by teachers as researchers (Stenhouse, 1988; Stuart, 2012). Action research as a method for this study was useful as a socially constructed tool. This method allowed this teacher-researcher contact with cultural-historical materialism to promote concepts of child development in an HGD class.

Action research allows professionals and teacher-researchers systematic evaluation, inquiry, and re-approach practices for social improvement within classrooms, organizations, and communities (Helskog, 2014; Lewin, 1946; Shabani, 2016; Stuart, 2012). A subfield of action research known as participatory action research (PAR) is a method to include all participants in the action research process. PAR is an active process that develops from unique needs and tasks and learning practices of specific groups (Stuart, 2012). In other words, PAR gives power to all stakeholders involved in giving a narrative to change (Jacobs, 2016).

Studies by Hine (2013) found the process of action research between two teacher education programs were workable examples for course curriculum and development. Hine (2013) concluded the importance of offering units of action research within professional training courses. Hong and Lawrence (2011) indicated that teachers need self-study and reflection to determine what will work best in their classrooms. However, what works best for that individual practitioner for continued professional development is vital to the process of action research. Understanding the process of action research includes: locating sources, collecting data, and prospective curriculum changes (Hong & Lawrence, 2011; Simms, 2013; Steele, 2012). This qualitative action research study examined the literary genre of a cultural fairy tale in an HGD course. The teacher-researcher, along with the students taking the course, planned, acted,
observed, and reflected on a stage of human development through a cultural fairy tale aligned with the assigned textbook.

**Research Questions**

The following overarching theory based question was answered in this study: How will integrating a cultural fairy tale into a college-level HGD class promote concepts of cultural diversity? The following problem based secondary research questions included:

**RQ1:** How can sign, tool, and mediation be used as a medium to communicate a cultural fairy tale to enhance cultural diversity in an HGD class?

**RQ2:** How does the use of a cultural fairy tale in an HGD class explain the cognitive processes in early childhood development?

**RQ3:** How is a cultural fairy tale used to scaffold concepts of cultural diversity in an HGD class?

**Assumptions of the Study**

The researcher made the following assumptions in this study.

1. That HGD courses would continue as a required elective and a general education course for associates of arts degree and specialized programs at the college where the study took place (Appendix A).

2. The participants answered the questionnaires honestly. Participants were offered anonymity and confidentiality in this study. Participants volunteered in this study and did not have other motives (Mills, 2003; Simon, 2011).

3. The HGD class chosen for this study was representative of students taking this class for pre-professional and general education credits (Appendix A)
4. The inclusion criteria of the sample were appropriate. All participants experienced the same in-class activity in the study.

5. The teacher-researcher and collaborative teacher had a similar interest in professional development. This teacher-researcher had a similar interest in the students, including the development of best practices for HGD courses (FDOE, 2016).

6. The folktale collection related to the cultures stated in the assigned textbook for the HGD class were representative of fairy tales, fables, folklore for this study.

7. The cultural fairy tale used in this study represented cultural diversity as relevant material (NCSS, 2010).

**Delimitations and Limitations of the Study**

The definition of delimitations in qualitative research refers to the perimeters of control that researchers place in a study (Simon, 2011). The delimitations of this study focused on course curriculum and instruction of an HGD course through the specific guidelines set by the Academic Program SLO Assessment Rubric (Academic Program Student Learning Outcomes, Social Science, 2016). This study concentrated on an HGD course and no other courses listed under the Behavioral Social Science for the Associate in Arts Degree. This study may not represent other theoretical frameworks of sociocultural theory (Philips, 1995) and other qualitative measures as this research study focused on curriculum and SLOs and not the nature of the student or specific individuals taking this course. This study included only one of three possible SLOs assessed along the associated rubric (Appendix B). Only the college SLO where the study took place was used. The teacher-researcher created all materials linked to the fairy tale activity and may not be sufficiently validated. The text-driven material was assigned to this course in the form of a textbook.
The definition of limitations in qualitative research refers to the probable vulnerabilities of control that researchers meet in a study (Simon, 2011). The limitations of using action research as a method do not always guarantee the generalizability of results outside of the situation of study. There was a limitation of action research as a method in transferability describing one situation to other similar situation, for example, another HGD class. The teacher-researcher designated the population of this study during data collection and in collaboration with the other full-time faculty members teaching the specific HGD course. Human growth and development courses taught by other instructors at the college were not included due to time constraints and academic freedom.

The Significance of the Study

This section addresses the significance of the study in the areas of scholarly research in literature, improvement of practice through professional development, and policy and decision making as required for accreditation standards (FDOE, 2016; SACSCOC, 2011). This study contributed to the existing literature on cultural diversity practices in the classroom. Integration of a cultural fairy tale approved by the NCSS is in alignment with the teaching of cultural diversity (NCSS, 2010). This research elucidated current literature using fairy tale categories in specific college courses listed under Behavioral Social Science. Furthermore, the research study added to the body of literature for courses that are text-driven and promoted an additional cultural context for SLOs. Lastly, this study added to the literature on the integration of a cultural fairy tale aligned with the assigned textbook and SLO. The research study added one way of using folktale, including fairy tales, myth, legend, and folklore as cultural artifact material for students taking HGD. This study is significant due to limited qualitative studies on the use of fairy tales in specific collegiate courses as HGD.
The research study added significance to practice through professional development standards as required by the Florida professional development evaluation protocols (FDOE, 2016). This study added to practice through individual needs assessment in learning goals aligned with components for student achievement and content skill in the classroom. The research also added to practice in professional development that outlines goals for measurable student achievement and educators’ practices. Lastly, this study added significance in the areas focused on content and the development of knowledge and content-specific instructional strategies (FDOE, 2016).

The research study added significance to standards set by the accreditation institution SACSCOC. The SACSCOC (2011) supports the improvement of educational programs. This research study adds to the policy of SACSCOC supporting faculty teaching, research, and publishing, students accessing opportunities for learning, and open ideas of education (SACSCOC, 2011). Finally, this study added significance to the mission of policy in accreditation to support resources for the growth and development of students.

Definitions of Terms

Culture. The term included cultural material or artifacts of cultural-historical environments (Vygotsky, 1978). This term related to anything created by nature and the transformation of nature to meet the cultural man.

Folktales. The term referred to the broad subject category related to the themes of the NCSS in alignment with curriculum standards. Folktales are the broad category that includes folklore, myths, legends, and fairy tales (NCSS, 2010).

Fairy tales. A classification of folktales containing the element of magic (Propp, 2015).
**Material.** Conveys cultural items or artifacts that were present in varying social environments (Vygotsky, 1929).

**Mediate.** The term means conveying and forming connections to link signs or language between individuals in a cultural setting (Vygotsky, 1978).

**Signs.** The term indicated a symbol or word to represent an operation, instruction, concept, or object; an auxiliary means of cultural method (Vygotsky, 1929).

**Tools.** The term conveyed tool or tools as cultural artifacts used as auxiliary means in both material form and psychological form as language. There were physical tools and psychological tools within Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of the cultural development of the child.

**Organization of the Study**

There are five chapters in this dissertation. Chapter 1 of this study outlined Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory as a background and contextualization for integrating a cultural fairy tale in a college HGD class. The teacher-researcher also explained identifying another way to present cultural diversity as the problem for this research. This chapter stated the purpose and research questions for this action research study. The chapter identified the assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the study, as well as the significance of the study and definitions of key terms. This study proceeds in Chapter 2 with a comprehensive literature review on the background of Vygotskian sociocultural theory as the theoretical framework for this research study. (Cole & Wertsch, 1996). This chapter also includes a detailed literature review of cultural fairy tales and their value in enhancing cultural diversity. Chapter 2 concludes with a thorough review of literature on Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory. Chapter 3 continues with a description of action research as a qualitative research design for this study. This section of the study identified college students in an HGD class as participants selected for this research. Ethical issues
including Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and informed consent are followed by a
description of data sources, protocols/instrumentation collection procedures, analysis, and
trustworthiness of the study. Chapter 4 of this study discussed the findings of the planned
activities using a cultural fairy tale in an HGD class in alignment with the research questions.
Chapter 5 discussed the conclusions and implications of this qualitative action research study.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter introduced the reader to the contextual problem through a brief introduction
of Vygotskian (Liu & Matthews, 2005; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000; Shabani, Khatib, & Ebadi,
2010; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992) sociocultural theory, Lewin’s (1946) model of action research,
and policies and guidelines set forth by accrediting organizations for quality teaching pedagogy.
This chapter also explained the study of integrating a cultural fairy tale with theories in HGD.
The problem in this study addressed the use of a cultural fairy tale to explore another way to
promote knowledge of cultural diversity in an HGD class. This course is textbook driven and
thus provides only one way to promote cultural diversity. Established SLOs at this college where
the study took place required teachers to identify ways of promoting cultural diversity. This
study aimed to explore the relationship between cultural fairy tales using Vygotskian (Liu &
Matthews, 2005; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000; Shabani et al., 2010; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992)
sociocultural theory as a way to promote cultural diversity concepts in early childhood. The
primary purpose of this study was to integrate a cultural fairy tale in a college level HGD class as
one way to promote concepts of cultural diversity.

Vygotskian sociocultural theory (Cole & Wertsch, 1996; Philips, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978)
provided a theoretical framework to integrate the literary genre of a fairy tale for Student
Learning Outcomes on Social Science Discipline-Specific Rubric in a college HGD course. This
study used Lewin’s (1946) action research model as a method to examine a fairy tale in a college HGD course (Almerico, 2013; NCSS, 2010). The research study promoted an identification “of differences and commonalities within diverse cultures from a global perspective” (Social Science General Education Core Competencies, 2013) and in alignment with the text-driven material in an HGD college classroom (Ebersole et al., 2016; Hong & Lawrence, 2011). Developing curriculum and instruction in an HGD course through the implementation of cultural fairy tales supports text-based theories for learning of students in general education and pre-professional programs (Korsmo et al., 2009).

Vygotskian sociocultural theory can provide college students with an opportunity to create their sense of meaning based on their unique cultural experience (Worthington & van Oers, 2017). Presenting text-based theories through the integration of fairy tales provided an opportunity to engage discourse of established theories in human development and reinforced the application of knowledge to practice (NCSS, 2010). Learning activities through teacher-researcher reflections, student reflections, literary evaluation, and course documentation further supported linear models of human growth through the lifespan and context of environments which students’ experience (Altun & Yucel-Toy, 2015; Ebersole et al., 2016). In this regard, this study examined human growth curriculum and instruction integrating a body of work in the category of folktale (NCSS, 2010) and thus reflected on three specific research questions using five constructs of Vygotskian sociocultural theory as a way to promote cultural diversity in an HGD course.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Umbridge: Students will raise their hand when they speak in my class. It is the view of the ministry that a theoretical knowledge will be sufficient to get you through your examinations, which after all is what school is all about!

Harry: and how is theory supposed to prepare us for what’s out there?

(Heyman, Barron, & Yates)

This literature review focused on specific works of Vygotsky including, Thought and Language (1962), The Collected Works of L. S. Vygotsky, volume 1, Problems of General Psychology (including the volume Thinking and Speech) (1987), The Psychology of Art (1971), and Mind in Society (1978) as the theoretical framework for support of this action research study. These works support the integration of a cultural fairy tale in a human growth and development course. This chapter proceeds with a definition of Vygotsky’s view of culture and influence of theoretical significance in a culturally historical context. It continues with an examination of the constructs sign, tool, and mediation, zone of proximal development, and scaffolding. There is an analysis of NCSS themes and categories, including recommended examples of folktales listed in the notable trade books for social studies (NCSS, 2017). This chapter concludes with action research’s application to culture and methodology for this study (Hine, 2013; Hong & Lawrence, 2011; Shabani, 2016). The constructs of tool, sign, mediation, ZPD, and scaffolding align with the research questions for this study (Vygotsky, 1978). As stated in chapter one, the primary purpose of this action research study is to integrate a cultural fairy tale in a college-level human growth and development class (HGD) as one way to promote concepts of cultural diversity using action research within the framework of Vygotskian sociocultural theory.
Theoretical Framework

In an offprint copy of Character and Personality published in 1935, A. R. Luria wrote an obituary of his friend, mentor, and colleague Lev S. Vygotsky. Luria (1935) described the complex domains in which Vygotsky was interested: developmental, educational, and abnormal psychology. Vygotsky’s works focused around the divisions of what he called a crisis in psychology. The division centered between the physiology field that concentrated on the brain in describing mind and behavior and the idealistic. The idealistic view centered on consciousness ascribing to complex behaviors and higher functions of the mind. Vygotsky did not concede to either view during his work. Instead, Vygotsky took the developmental point to explain higher functions of consciousness and origins of the mind. Luria (1935) continues in his contribution by supporting Vygotsky’s work on the psychological behavior of child origin and responsive structures to modern psychology. The main dominator of the child according to Vygotsky is social-cultural development (Luria, 1935).

Vygotsky produced a volume of papers, not translated and published in English until the mid-20th century. According to Luria (1935), Vygotsky centered his attention on higher mental functions including memory, attention, thought, and speech. He is given credit within the Soviet circle for being the first to use development as a method of investigation. Vygotsky’s concern centered on complex behaviors and the primary influence of speech on development. Luria (1935) concludes his tribute by expressing a deep Soviet public life connection to Vygotsky creating influence in schools and institutions today.

Another Soviet psychologist and confidante of Vygotsky (1896-1934) was A. N. Leontiev (1903-1979). Leontiev worked with Vygotsky from 1924 to 1930 in his psychology lab alongside Luria (Vygotsky, 1997b). In a preface to Vygotsky’s third volume of collected works
published in English (Vygotsky, 1997b), Leontiev (1979) presented an exhaustive timeline based on unequivocal lectures and papers. During his tenure with Vygotsky, Leontiev helped to create the cultural-historical research project. Through his early devotion to Vygotsky, he collaborated alongside Luria in the development of cultural-historical psychology within soviet psychological circles (Marxist Internet Archive, 2009). Leontiev (1979) acknowledged the disciplines of humanities, philosophy, and linguistics, renewing interest in Vygotsky’s publications. Vygotsky’s works are not historical documents but continuous structures through time. Disciplines, including psychology and education, advocate Vygotsky’s most notable accomplishments. Vygotsky’s philosophy and theories are known more than his name (Leontiev, 1979).

Leontiev’s timeline began during a shift in scientific history and psychology. This shift occurred during the Soviet revolution and the appearance of Marxism. The great Socialist October revolution influenced Vygotsky’s creative work. The boundaries were established in the psychological areas of both genesis of behavior and higher mental consciousness. The Western world also increased various schools of thought at the same time. The United States lay claim to numerous schools of behaviorism and German schools of Gestalt (Leontiev, 1979). Leontiev (1979) confesses that Soviet Russia birthed Marxist’s psychology. The development of the Marxist’s school of psychology coincided with the appearance of Vygotsky in psychology.

The timeline of Vygotsky’s works started here. From 1924 to his death in 1934, he produced over 180 works within these ten years. Vygotsky’s scientific endeavors started as a student at both Moscow and Shanyavsky Universities (Leontiev, 1979). He divided his humanitarian attention in several directions to include literary criticism, law, and history. These humanitarian directions shaped his influence on Spinoza. Spinoza’s philosophy continued to
affect Vygotsky through the rest of his short life. Later, Vygotsky focused on political economies, which influenced his theories of labor and the formation of Marxist’s psychology. His primary devotion to literature and the writers of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy molded his ideas to the reader’s perception of the literary work and the abundance of continued analysis in critique. Vygotsky worked for many years on *The Psychology of Art* (1971), which became his published dissertation. Leontiev’s preface to *The Collected Works of L.S. Vygotsky: Problem of the Theory and History of Psychology, vol 3* (1997b) continued with an outline of works that narrow the theoretical assumptions of a higher order of consciousness, tool, speech, and most importantly, culture as Vygotsky designed. He defended Vygotsky’s hypothesis of relationships to basic and higher mental functions. Co-existence occurred within two planes of mental functions: the first level developed in the biological domain or nature to mind. The second was the result of culture to higher mental functions.

Jerome Bruner (1915-2016), a social constructivist and educational theorist, furthered the accolades of stature to Vygotsky by composing an introduction to one of his most acclaimed writings *Thought and Language* in the first English version published in 1962. Bruner (Vygotsky, 1962) introduced readers to a translated world only 30 years after the original work was written. Bruner (Vygotsky, 1962) repeated the short lifespan of Vygotsky and the grandiose level of writings focused on the development of thought intertwined, yet at times separated from the development of language. He maintained Vygotsky’s interest in the styles of Soviet psychology outlined in Marxists foundation, yet divided by man’s independence for higher consciousness. Bruner acknowledged that man’s mind and hands constructed tools and instruments. Vygotsky (1978) related that tools accomplish the tasks and later become signs for future behavior. Bruner (Vygotsky, 1962) exposed Vygotsky’s work in language through the
process of internalization, assisting the intellect, and materials that set patterns both divergent and convergent.

Bruner (Vygotsky, 1962) concluded this introduction in *Thought and Language* by commending the many paths to individuality and freedom defined by Vygotsky’s developmental theory. Twenty-five years later, in the collected works edition of Vygotsky (1987), including the renamed *Thinking and Speech*, Bruner proceeded to strengthen the original introduction. He concluded that Vygotsky gave to readers not only a theory of education but also a tradition of cultural-historical atmosphere to the foundation of sociocultural theory.

The embodiment of culture colored Lev Vygotsky’s work from the uncomplicated use of the word to a complex interwoven social and historical framework. Developmental theorists implied culture as an influential base from which development is the foundation and the prime meridian of his theories (Cole & Wertsch, 1996; Liu & Matthews, 2005; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000; Van Der Veer, 1996; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). In other words, culture was the origin of all longitudinal lines in Vygotsky’s theoretical framework (1997a) of the cultural-historical individual (Van Der Veer, 1996; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). This social interaction led to continuous, systematic changes in children’s thoughts and behaviors that fluctuate significantly from environment to environment (Luria, 1928; Rezaee & Azizi, 2012; Vygotsky, 1928, 1978, 1987; Worthington & van Oers, 2017). Contemporary theoretical frameworks are often re-evaluated, where trends and advancement in specific fields take place (Philips, 1995; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). Vygotsky’s original foundation of cultural influence fit neatly into the Western ideology of a versatile framework. This framework permitted an inventive framework for the continuous change of cultural environments and studies.
For the discipline of human growth and development, Vygotsky’s use of culture is crucial for the application of his theoretical models on stages in higher mental functions. Vygotsky’s command of the word culture was founded more on its influence in mediating through social interaction (Keaton & Bodie, 2011). Wertsch and Tulviste (1992) pointed out humans are free superficially but below bound by lines of culture. This cultural individual appeared to act on its own accord. Beneath the surface, connected sociocultural lines provide the foundation of individuality.

Vygotsky (1928) believed culture as social actions through the results of production. Cultural development was formulated out of a problem of behavior and to a social plan for future development. Vygotsky’s use of culture was comorbid with other words in his defense to the social-historical individual. Culture co-occurred with his developmental verbiage of higher mental functioning in humans allowing an opportunity to produce a theory following historical culture through time. Vygotsky’s ideas of culture played a pivotal role in his theoretical framework of social construction (Kalpana, 2014). Human development was birthed into a culture that took place within given a context. This dialectical relationship affected culture as culture affected the human (Albert & Trommsdorff, 2014).

In Vygotsky’s article, “The problem of the cultural development of the child” (1929), he explained that through the development of cultural experience the cultural behavior of the child was mastered. Cultural experience eventually forms the habituation of all forms of future cultural behavior. Therefore, experiencing habits and behaviors in the process of development was culture (Kalpana, 2014). The comorbid use of the word culture established the connection of cultural-historical influence. The list of words simultaneous to culture was long and expressed in Luria’s (1928) dissection of cultural behavior of the child (e.g., adaptation, forms, behavior,
habits, experience, methods, and signs). Vygotsky (1929) extended this duality by including cultural reasoning in his article. Even though Vygotsky was exceptionally versed in the theories of culture through anthropology, sociology, and other fields, he catered to them only as secondary (Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). Vygotsky (1928) celebrated eminently in his description of the natural development of the child. Vygotsky developed two routes on this voyage to development. The first map described the route based on biological maturation. This map was auto-piloted by genetic predispositions in organic growth. The second route set a course by culture towards the psychological utilities of societal methods bound to cultural reasoning.

Luria (2012) supported this foundation for the theoretical framework of the cultural-historical model used by the field of modern psychology to investigate the cultural forms of social adaptation. According to Rene van der Veer (1996), Vygotsky’s influence of culture and use of the word was influenced by two Humboldtian scholars, Aleksandr Potebnya (1835-91) and Gustav Shpet (1879-1937). Both scholars emphasized the psychological influence of language, sign, and speech in social-cultural contexts. The study of signs and symbol thus used and interpreted an elevated and exalted higher function of the human mind (Van der Veer, 1996). The influence of these two scholars strengthened Vygotsky’s theory by emphasizing the word as the tool to continuous individual function (Van der Veer, 1996). Vygotsky’s use of the word culture defined the proceeding sections of this literature review. His use of culture in reference to cultural mediation and the social individual in sign, tool, material, and contexts were the longitudinal lines to cultural language. Mediation became a critical human function in his theory. Culture supported this mediation through technical psychological tools (Churcher, Downs, & Tewksbury, 2014). Vygotsky’s (1931) application of tools and signs formed his analysis of social origin or genesis of cultural behavior in the child.
Theorists in the field of child development described and explained that the building blocks of being human start with the capacity of self-awareness (Brook-Gunn & Lewis, 1975; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000; Williams, 2010). Theorists also expressed that culture has strong influential ties to this developing psychological self (Vygotsky, 1987; Williams, 2010). Culture also played a significant role in the appropriateness of social selves and ways this self-being was expressed (Luria, 1928; Vygotsky, 1929). In a sense, “I” and “me” were central to human experiences and how engagement of “self” created successful social encounters (Liu & Matthews, 2005; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, 1987).

All of these so-called, “social selves” had a direct influence on the culture practiced (Vygotsky, 1978). In a series of lectures on psychology, published in The Collected Works of L. S. Vygotsky, Volume 1: Problems of General Psychology (Vygotsky, 1987), he titled the first lecture “Perceptions and its [sic] development in childhood” (p. 289). He began by discussing the concept of perception and its place in the field of experimental psychology. He described that perception, at that time, had been rewritten with great traditional detail. Vygotsky (1987) explained the perception of the child regarding physical awareness of the body. He proposed questions focused on the sense of self outside of this physical body. His first question centered on perception as a whole and not separate from the body. Vygotsky proposed how the body as physical was linked to self-perception to form a meaningful self. As the child developed, according to Vygotsky (1987), the perception of the outer world was connected with speech. He concluded by asking the question of the child’s development and perception through speech. Is this a sign by which the child will perceive the cultural self?

Culture persuaded the development of social being (Altun & Yucel-Toy, 2015; Luria, 1928; Vygotsky, 1929; Worthington & van Oers, 2017). Vygotsky (1929) explained this cultural
interlude in his example of children at different maturational ages and the concept of
memorization. He described the possibility that the biology of children may vary little, but by
cultural development and the influence of cultural technique, the older child mastered a scheme
(Vygotsky, 1928, p. 58). Maturation became secondary as complex behaviors proceeded to
higher structures of human behavior. He continued to suggest that development was not only a
quantifiable measurement but also a qualitative transformation (Vygotsky, 1978). In the process
of development, theorists traced that qualitative change in behavior and the transformation of
some forms into others. Cultural development of the child was mastering methods of behavior
based on the use of signs. The cultural signs used as the means of accomplishing psychological
operations revised the cultural maturation of the developing child (Luria, 1928; Vygotsky, 1929).

This cultural mediation implied a way of communication through acceptable forms of
signs, tools, and symbols formed through infinite generativity of language (Luria, 1928;
Solovieva & Quintanar, 2016; Vygotsky, 1928, 1978; Yang, 2000). Based on his analysis of
biological maturation and cultural development, a significant implication to his theory of cultural
self lay in primitiveness. The historical systems of the past provided knowledge banks that can
be shared and taught from current generations to the next (Philips, 1995). These historical
systems were products of culture and history. One generation created a historical culture and
reality became once again physical (Bayanova, 2013). The cultural self had the material
opportunity to become a reality in specific conditions. Culture encompassed this knowledge of
experience, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, and relations (Keaton & Bodie, 2011).
Culture designed concepts of human, social, and historical life (Vygotsky, 1930b). Culture was
the consistency of the past, present, and future (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). Signs and tools
were symbolic representations of implicit and explicit patterns of people within societal groups
(Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, 1994). Culture totaled the sum of artifacts that influenced behavior and traditional ideas in material and immaterial mediation. The cultural collective was the accumulative evolution of man (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). Vygotsky (1978) declared that “human beings are created by the society in which they live and that it represents the determining factor in the formation of their personalities,[sic] remains in force” (p. 176). The total of the collective, not the individual numbers, defined the mind and provided the baseline for identifying people from one another (Keaton & Bodie, 2011; Liu & Matthews, 2005; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000).

Humans need to interpret the environments and appraise the meanings through what Vygotsky (1962) described as condition theory functions of concept formation. A result of thinking, linked with culture, provided information to act and respond in certain ways. Humans interpreted culture with words or constructs (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). A concept can be described as a simple means of generalizing categories of objects (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Both were similar, but constructs added abstract meanings to behaviors and actions. In other words, constructs can be defined by the variables that made up their definition. Constructs were often described by using other constructs. Behaviors and actions described constructs in situation-specific and context-bound activities (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

Culture applied constructs to the mind; therefore, sociocultural theory gave the possibility to study and gain access to learning. Sociocultural theory fell under the philosophical framework or worldview as a theoretical paradigm to conduct qualitative research (Liu & Matthews, 2005). This worldview offered a lens to explore the complex territories of current social contexts. Vygotskian components provided the foundation to emerge and understand the territory of varying environments. This framework cemented the original tales of tools and mediated new
signs of stories presented (Vygotsky, 1971). The context of Vygotsky’s theory created a psychological and educational model of human cognitive development that is taught today (Keaton & Bodie, 2011).

Marxism birthed Vygotsky’s perspective, and his sociocultural experiences reflected his own life in a time of persecution and struggle of Russian divergence (McQueen, 2010; Vygotsky, 1994). His philosophical works were not truly understood until the first translation of his work Thought and Language (1962). One of his most notable works, Mind in Society (1978), provided inclusion of cultural guidance in the development of the social self. He imparted the being from an ontological and epistemological stance that widened the platform of linguistic constructions. An understanding of his concepts perpetuated the foundation of social systems as a cultural collectivity (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000; Shabani, 2016).

The central philosophy that Vygotsky discovered within his creative work Mind in Society (1978) assembled the human essence of behavior. He focused on biological foundations with societal history and influence of individual uniqueness. Vygotsky’s (1978) suggested analysis was grounded in questions converging the understanding of interactive behavioral beings in environments, labor of activities to consequences, and relationships of tool use and communication of speech. Labor was a consistent theme in Vygotsky’s writings. He proposed labor as a relationship in humans to nature and significances of movement. Biological foundations related to the construct of maturation. These were innate biological pressures stimulated by the environment during the first two years of development (Piaget, 1970). Vygotsky translated maturation as a process to future complex behaviors outside the boundaries of human and more about the animal. He proposed that motivation be a passive explanation of complex occurrences. In comparison to simple motor skills of development during the first year
of life, a process of change to social behaviors required intricate tertiary progression to learning. His concerns of human as being in his analysis of context strengthened ontological foundations to the paradigm of constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky’s detailed investigation into the work of Wolfgang Koehler and Charlotte Buhler confirmed his early theory of primitive child cognition (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, 1987). Vygotsky’s particular interest concentrated on the construct of practical intelligence in comparison to ape intelligence. He was attentive to the comparison between the primitive uses of tools manipulated only when presented in the visual field. The primitive child and non-human primate exhibited similar behavioral responses in manifestations of tool intellect similar to the description of Piaget’s cognitive stage theory (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky’s opinion of Kohler’s experiments described the intellect of ape and child; implying apes can think with tools, problem solve and invent. All of these behavioral acquisitions by apes were separate from speech.

Vygotsky (1978) deduced a theoretical conclusion of systematic organization between apes and primitive children. Culture produced tools provided by nature and psychological tools referenced to social history. Using tools physically presented preceded and appeared separate from human speech (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky’s conclusion of Buhler’s work with chimps emphasized the incorporation of later speech development and practical skills to language. Human experience via cultural tools united early developmental changes and transformations. His discussions of tools directly linked to Engls’ concept of labor and tool in a manipulation of nature intertwined with a change in humans (Vygotsky, 1978). All psychological sign systems, including language, writing, and number systems were created through history and linked to the change in cultural development.
Previous ontological studies emphasized higher mental functions as comprising all cognitive development. In the article “The problem of cultural development of the child” (1929), Vygotsky alluded to the factor of genesis and natural development of the child based on human growth and developmental stages. He confirmed that changes in cultural development and cultural self are lines of progress both inward and outward. He suggested that signs of development do remain stationary but change inward and outward because of structural behavior. Technical thinking provided the baseline for cognitive development. He often referred to the work of Buhler’s understanding of speech independent of practical thinking. This form of thinking remained in the ape but advanced to speech in his theory of child development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Dialectical materialism based on activity and sign (abstract intelligence), founded in Marxism, provided the inception of Vygotsky’s (1929) cultural development of the child. The historical connection between individual and social based on dialectical interaction supported Vygotsky’s developmental theory (Liu & Matthews, 2005). By operating within as one being, an organization of activity transformed. The use of tools and signs was altered to the symbolic activity about the pursuit of new behavior. Vygotsky’s thinking incorporated practical attainment with sign and language into one monistic organism (Liu & Matthews, 2005). Vygotsky’s ideas furthered the need to establish fundamental perspectives of monist thinking in comparison to dualist thinking among early constructivists. Vygotsky’s model presented a theoretical context of the individual as a symbolic representation of both mind and reality. This source of interaction extended beyond the mind and body modality. His model presented the mind as the symbolic representation, and the physical through sign or language (Vygotsky, 1978).
With the help of an attending adult, the young child incorporated words representing the social world (Vygotsky, 1962, 1987). Interactions were custom to the environment, and new unions of behavior created. The cognitive development of future intellect based on a scaffold interaction became tools in human form. He concluded that when these connections of human development found their coordination the lines of intellectual exchange take place (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978, 1987). The cultural child’s speech became the lines in the narrative of the activity. Vygotsky (1978) suggested that children’s use of speech allowed greater freedom of accomplishment when given speech tasks. Children moved beyond direct lines, to indirect and mediated lines to resolve tasks. He explained the child’s ability to separate indirect cognitive thoughts of a task by private speech to outward observable behavior. This inner speech directed outward problem-solving strategies.

Children have the new ability to engineer material objects and center their behavior inside the social-cultural context. Vygotsky developed the hypothesis that egocentric speech marked the transition from the external to internal (Vygotsky, 1978). Subject and object existed in the human mind, in a digital map in present day culture. Cultural artifacts manipulated the cultural medium. These cultural devices can retell the story to repeated generations. The cultural material, such as stories preserved through heritage, allowed people to exchange and continue context-specific language (Cole & Wertsch, 1996). In Thought and Language (1962), Vygotsky discussed egocentric speech in relation to function. He proposed the question of why speech turned inwards; speech is to the self. Stories became private; allowing the once listener of cultural material to retell through the inner self of the developing cultural being.

Talking above the acoustic level of whisper to inward dialog demonstrated non-vocal behavior (Vygotsky, 1962). Speech function changed according to Vygotsky. He referenced
three levels of speech: external, egocentric, and internal. He described speech development in alignment to other cognitive operations, such as sequential counting and memorization of objects. Vygotsky (1962) approached a comparison to the laws of cultural self in development and capabilities of cultural sign usage. In other words, this cultural instruction followed the same organization as developmental timetables and curriculum.

Children learned in their contextual world that tools are not instantly available (Worthington & van Oers, 2017). Through egocentric speech, the child imitated social speech to acquire the goals. In other means, asking help for cultural manipulation of the artifact. Both forms of social speech were linked from private to social. Vygotsky (1978) developed the hypothesis regarding the transference of external to internal speech as a consequence of egocentric speech. Children turned on their new-formed verbal self and sought help, using language (sign) as a problem-solving strategy in cultural tool materialism. Vygotsky (1978) summed up this reflection of the symbolic historical story in descriptions of a child’s use of others and self in the completion of activities. Through initiation, contact with others for the self-purpose of material was acquired. Learning this topology of behavior and moving to self-achievement was the social and individual goal. The social self relied on the self-attitude within correct social forms of behavior.

This example given by Vygotsky depicted the individual constructed as a social self within the matrix of society and culture. The individual named the artifact after completion of the learning task. As the child mastered signs and language describing cultural material it transcended to immaterial in the mind of the child. Vygotsky (1978) related the shaping of activity into formation based on the word or words specific to the child. In this case, Vygotsky related this word activity to the child’s internal structure. The internal structure allowed for
stories to be shaped by the knower; just as children reshaped learned language. The social self in culture reshaped the tale of the new territorial map. Signs and words created the environment to enculturate the self and master what was previously not attained. Language into stories became the advancement of cultural humanity above animals (Vygotsky, 1978).

In challenging circumstances, the individual (learner) directed attention with a changed immaterial speech to resolve the cultural issue. The plan was in action, but temporary guidance from another individual was needed. Vygotsky (1978) maintained that paths were created from object to child and child to object. This scaffolding of pathways came from the adults in the child’s developmental context. Human beings learned to plan internally. A mental map was projected, and with the advantage of a guide, the individual sought the collective culture. According to Vygotsky (1978), this framework of mental success as the learner gained the ability to control others for overall success. The developmental process linked the individual and the social-cultural history to establish a complex human structure. There was an increased link between tools presented in an individual’s culture and sign/speech influenced by the sensory and perceptual field. The social background, therefore, presented itself. The backdrop and foreground of the cultural canvas changed with the advancement of social speech. The story began with the presence of objects set in motion. Understanding each object and its medium in the backdrop of social history allocated the ability to see the picture itself (Vygotsky, 1978).

Labeling gave purpose to identifying and giving meaning to parts of that social world. Culture labeled objects and modified these objects in the social context of each story. Words began to flow through emotional platforms. The cultural self in the social world exploded with abilities to increase the sensory plane and form artifacts within the mind (Vygotsky, 1978). The perception of real objects became categorized in a social context. Vygotsky (1978) defined this
sense of conscious awareness of people, place, events, and time as real within the mind. Signs and language constructed a time field. This language system, based on choice, fostered the child’s autobiographic memory, and the cultural self becomes the story.

Memory formed fragments of the past but resulted in new methods of uniting the elements of past experiences with the present. The cultural being had intentions and symbolic representations of purposeful actions. The use of signs and words permitted the social self to break from the binds of the biological self to invent the new non-mediated culturally organized self. Signs, according to Vygotsky (1962, 1978, 1987), were historical. This frame provided the foundation of sociocultural theory and social construction of tools and human speech. Literature became the canvas that reinforced the dialectical, historical, and monist thinking of Vygotsky’s (1978) *Mind in Society, Thought and Language* (1962), and his doctoral dissertation, *The Psychology of Art* (1971). Works centered on literary criticism and the influence on the cognitive development of the self.

This framework of cultural-historical development also influenced Vygotsky’s theory of learning and the influential importance of interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). He believed learning was diverse and not centered on just one specific ability. It was the ability to think about many specialized areas of thinking. Vygotsky concluded that there were many theories of learning and development. He summed up past theoretical models focused on learning as separate from the developing child; learning was development, combining both as singular lines of maturation (Vygotsky, 1978). To Vygotsky, learning was influenced by what the child brought with him based on cultural influence, and what he needed to know from various cultures. The mental capacity of children at the same and varying ages can be different. The zone of proximal development proposed by Vygotsky was a method of instruction based on culture. Through the
use of cultural signs, the adult guided or mediated what the child needed to know (Rezaee & Azizi, 2012). Cultural signs were diverse and set for independent problem-solving in specific social contexts. This method, according to Vygotsky, provided the tools for professionals in the fields of education and psychology. The zone of proximal development provided an environment for teacher-researchers to engage in cultural diversity and take actions of reflection on methods for cultural learning (Solovieva & Quintanar, 2016; Wass & Golding, 2014).

With this framework as the paradigm holding the longitudinal lines of culture, an evaluation of socio-cultural tools and symbolic mediation of cultural narratives was examined. Sociocultural theory only recently established in the time of Vygotskian translation, gave the teacher-researcher the tools to draw cultural connections through literature. Following the theoretical framework of Vygotskian sociocultural theory, this study examined integrating a cultural fairy tale in a college-level human growth and development course.

Researchers in the fields of education and social science had collective questions on how humans change physically, cognitively, and emotionally. One model of recurrent interest fell within the theoretical framework of sociocultural theory (Cole & Wertsch, 1996; Liu & Matthews, 2005; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000; Philips, 1995). The specific theoretical conditions of feeling, thinking, and behaving reflected the intertwined social development and social selves. In the past decade, contemplative questions arose from this paradigm, and it centered on the social-historical constructs that formed the foundation of the social self (Keaton & Bodie, 2011).

Theorists in the specialized field of human growth and development suggested that humans possessed higher levels of consciousness (Philips, 1995). How individuals related these skills and abilities through interactions in varying environments, provided the basis of social constructs in life (Philips, 1995). Vygotsky (1962, 1978, 1987) approached the ongoing
questions of culture and higher mental functions to influence a modern theoretical model known as sociocultural theory. Vygotsky believed it was more important to perceive consciousness as meaningful, not to know all the ontological answers (Liu & Matthews, 2005). This framework referred to the questions asked by researchers in the social sciences about the development of the self as a cultural being. Vygotsky (1978, 1987) and other socio-culturists proposed ideas of possessing the abilities to perceive, use, understand, and manage cultural selves. Therefore, to organize societal states in which growth takes place. This form of proposed self within culture created a body of philosophy from its inception of learning to a framework that colored the world with thought. Theorists have debated over the territory that defined social constructs and the intricacies of the mind that allowed individuals to relate through mediums in the social world (Churcher, et al., 2014; Keaton & Bodie, 2011; Philips, 1995).

The social constructivist framework supported the questions of studies as human environments and conditions continually change. This framework was not always visible in the social context studied (Dickson, Chun, & Fernandez, 2016). Each study experienced the framework as a priori knowledge. The frame of a priori knowledge supported the opportunity of objectivity in changing cultural contexts. Vygotsky’s translated works in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s gave inquiry to revisit social and linguistic interactions and to provide the dimensions of the current theoretical framework of sociocultural theory (Ozlem, 2013).

This framework allowed researchers opportunities for interaction with individuals as collectives (Shabani, 2016). Developing social exchange opened the interpretation of cultural vernacular within specific contexts (Cole & Wertsch, 1996; Philips, 1995; Toom, 2013). The social constructivist worldview granted access to cultural material and immaterial used between people and engaging in interaction to make the subjective social self (Cole & Wertsch, 1996; Liu
& Matthews, 2005; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). Vygotskian philosophy laid the type of frame within the worldview of sociocultural theory. Understanding the complexity of sociocultural theory as an interpretive framework allowed the separation of social and construct as individual signs. Vygotsky evaluated this concept of social construct through the critical lens of literature (Bayanova, 2013). His depth of valuation in novel, fable, and Shakespearean dissect led to an understanding of continued nuance for literature. Each reader began a new perspective. The cultural-historical frame, in which the narrative read, brought new comprehension and restoration (Bayanova, 2013; Simms, 2013; Zipes, 2012). Organizations such as the National Council of Social Studies (NCSS, 2017) provided opportunities to integrate literature with social collectives. Professionals had a platform to re-evaluate literature through the critical lens of Vygotskian sociocultural theory (Pitsoe & Maïla, 2012).

The National Council for the Social Studies was founded in 1921 for the dedication of providing K-12 and postsecondary institutions with a platform for social studies education (NCSS, 2010). The organization served as oversight for professionals, including teachers, teacher-researchers, and college instructors, in the vast fields of social science and education. Membership was offered in all 50 states and reached 69 foreign countries (NCSS, 2017). Members are eclectic and represent teachers, professors, curriculum designers, researchers, and school officials within the broader community. All social studies fields were incorporated into the foundation of the NCSS to include history, civics, geography, economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and specific courses of science. The NCSS organization represented a sizeable encompassing body of professionals dedicated to the service of teaching knowledge, skills, and practices that delineated to the contribution of democracy (NCSS, 2010). One of the main concepts the NCSS believes in centers on the concepts of civic and civic
conduct. The NCSS (2010) took the perspective of diversity as a central core to establishing
guidelines of civic responsibilities in culture, language, race, ethnicity, and learning needs of all
students. NCSS (2010) also acknowledged the current issues of immigration and economics from
a global standpoint and governmental policies.

Social studies included the social sciences and humanities (NCSS, 2010). Within the halls
of academia, each field contributed to the knowledge base that formed content and curriculum in
alignment with K-12 and post-secondary standards. NCSS considers civil competence a central
aim in the educational curriculum. Educating students to ideas in a democracy is a central theme
in the NCSS guidelines. NCSS provides opportunities for specialized courses to design
curriculum and instruction that meet current standards in core areas within each institution.

The national curriculum implemented by the NCSS provided a framework centered on
methods of pedagogical teaching, studying procedures, and assessment measurements in each
domain. These framework standards, first introduced in 1994 and revised in 2010, represent
specific areas of the organization that demonstrate the capacity to develop curriculum aligned
with specific content areas (NCSS, 2010). The revised standards continue to reflect themes based
on the original framework. Themes, based on knowledge, can be developed within each grade
level in K-12 and post-secondary. The primary objective of the NCSS (2010) was to provide a
working framework for teaching, learning, and assessment. These objectives provided the
platform for curriculum goals and objectives across all disciplines of social studies. The fields of
social studies continue to be grounded in research by professionals and practitioners whose
specialized areas on the content influence the NCSS standards and framework.

The NCSS (2010) encouraged a structure taking themes individualistically or combined
to increase designated purposes, information, and activities. This thematic structure depended on
specific curriculum goals and objectives. The framework of standards was provided to all educators, parents, and academic institutions that required a systematic approach to departments in federal, local and community organizations. The NCSS provided a broader framework for the diversity of content presented in each discipline. The curriculum standards of the NCSS addressed thematic issues to be implemented in all disciplines with the versatility of changing educational environments. The strands offered educators in K-20 institutions descriptions of purpose, processes, and products in curriculum design. The NCSS curriculum standards were not designed to replace content standards of any institutions. The goal was to provide educators and education researchers with a framework to strengthen state, local, and individual institutions learning outcomes.

The NCSS (2010) proposed ten thematic strands for curriculum design in social studies fields. Strands provided a way to categorize topics based on human knowledge and experience. The first thematic strand was culture. Students focused on people, places, and global civilizations, both contemporary and ancient (NCSS, 2010). Topics were covered within broad areas including courses in social studies and other core standard courses. Specialized courses were tailored to meet specific content on cultural curriculum including history, geography, sociology, psychology, and anthropology. The second theme was time, continuity, and change. The central theme in this area focused on past to present and the places and individuals that marked historical differences through events and change. Students focused on history and other social studies instruction aligned with the curriculum.

The third theme was people, places, and environments. This theme focused on the micro and macro systems in which humans live and interact with their environment. Students focused on diversity within environments that affect cultural development. Students in K-12 study
geography, while students in post-secondary school study advanced areas of geography and disciplines including cultural and developmental psychology. The fourth theme was individual development and identity. This theme focused on human development through the lifespan and the influence of individuals, groups, and cultures’ impact on development. Students taking specific courses in developmental psychology, anthropology, and human growth and development studied theories and research on individual development, including the formation of one’s identity. The fifth theme was individuals, groups, and institutions. In this theme, students center learning on what defined family and civic organizations that affect the development of the individual. Institutions were studied through units of family dynamics to governmental agencies. Curriculum and instruction in courses such as psychology, sociology, political science, and history concentrated on influences that defined the cultural-historical person.

The sixth theme was power, authority, and governance. The central focus in this area was a democracy, both in government and authority. Students learned the process of government and the effects on people. Specific units were covered in K-12 in all social sciences and specific courses at the post-secondary level. The seventh theme was production, distribution, and consumption. This theme taught learners about the products of human inventions and distribution of those goods. The theme brought into line the studies of the distribution of labor and its effects on domestic and global transactions. Students took courses designed to address economic content. Economics is required for many post-secondary degrees, but the course was taught in social studies units at early and middle levels. The eighth theme was science, technology, and society. Advances in science and technology were the central theme in this expanding area. Learners looked at the increased emphasis on how technology and science influence human
societies. Students took courses in social studies in K-12 and specific courses in history and government with an emphasis on technology.

The ninth theme was global connections. Increased global diversity was the focus. Students learned about worldviews and perceptions of people throughout the world. Increased access to globalization allowed students to gain knowledge of diverse people. Course curriculum in social science provided content in this arena. The tenth theme was civic ideals and practices. The final theme centered attention on public and community in relation to human involvement and the significance of participating citizenship. Students learned the roles that people play as accountable citizens. Courses in this theme included social sciences, law, humanities, and education (NCSS, 2010).

According to the NCSS (2010), these themes focused on broad issues and not explicitly identified content within particular fields. The emphasis was placed on the usability to incorporate themes into the identified curriculum and designed to cross all grades levels (NCSS, 2010). The framework of the NCSS themes for social studies was conceived around descriptors of knowledge, reason, and processes intended as guidance for program development (NCSS, 2010). This study focused on the NCSS thematic strand of culture and presented a cultural fairy tale consistent with this theme. Cultural narratives in this study centered on early childhood development in accordance with early childhood theories.

The main portraiture describing culture proclaimed experiences of culture and diversity through programs of study in social studies curriculum. The NCSS (2010) holds a viewpoint that culture includes human ideas through historical traditions, cultural artifacts, and cultural-historical behaviors that represent all groups of people. Just as Vygotsky (1978) used the representations of sign and tool to represent cultural signs and tools, so does the NCSS (2010)
suggest the use of tools and signs specific to a culture. It is important to include literature written at specific periods, music, art and cultural artifacts (Rahim & Rahiem, 2012). NCSS examined the connections between a culture’s beliefs, rituals, ideas, and effects on other aspects of that culture, for example, literature. The framework recommended by the NCSS (2010) suggested a variety of approaches, especially the use of fiction and nonfiction (Almerico, 2013). One approach, according to the NCSS (2010), provided students with the avenue to address culture through the conceptual lens of personal interactions, cultural natures, and techniques of evaluation through assimilation and accommodation. The continued evaluation of literature, both fiction and nonfiction, remains a central tenet of this organization. A collaboration with the Children’s Book Council (CBC) assured quality literature that met the teaching, learning, and assessment criteria for curriculum and instruction standards (NCSS, 2017).

The quality of children’s trade books fostered this collaboration between the committees of the NCSS and the CBC (2017). The CBC is an active organization directed at the continued philosophy of quality trade books for curriculum and instructional uses. Since its inception in 1944-1945, this non-profit organization has sponsored children’s book week at the bequest of Frederick Melcher, ensuring quality books for children and programs to encourage reading (CBC, 2017). Not only does the CBC oversee the tradition of children’s book week, but they also advocate for the quality assurance of the children’s publishing industry. This organization expounds on issues of new literary projects, the sustained action of evaluations in quality, and the diversity of children’s trade books. The CBC diversity committee goes beyond the established criteria by bringing together professionals in the fields to ensure that quality books represent all expressions of current environments and cultures (CBC, 2017). The NCSS (2017)
and the CBC (2017) committees look for literature that emphasized the categories with a specific focus on human relations and diverse cultural experiences.

Each year, a reading list of children’s trade books are itemized through the NCSS organization website. This list provides for all members and professionals interested in utilizing literature in specific classes or courses. The title, “Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People,” is located under publications (NCSS, 2017). The lists provided on this organizational website started in 2000 and continued to 2017 (NCSS, 2017). A provisional list for 2017 was available through the partnership with CBC. An ongoing relationship since 1972, the NCSS and CBC book committees gather to review recently published books submitted by publishing companies. The NCSS and CBC committees evaluate for literature that empathizes the categories with a specific focus on human relations and culturally diverse experiences. Each year, books are approved and categorically identified using the NCSS thematic strands for curriculum and instruction alignment (CBC, 2017; NCSS, 2017).

The NCSS (2017) categories included: biography, contemporary concerns, environment/energy/ecology, folktales, geography/people, places, history/life and culture in the Americas, reference, social interactions/relationships, world history, and culture. The broad subject categories stayed relatively consistent over the past 17 years; book lists expand and maintain current publication dates (NCSS, 2017). This study concentrated on the integration of a literary narrative through the category of folktales. Incorporating a cultural fairy tale as an additional resource in alignment with assigned text offers educators material to meet curriculum standards in cultural diversity (Villar et al., 2013; Warner, 2014). Folktales can serve as illustrations for populations of minority and recently immigrated populations not represented in traditional folktales usually told through the ages in mainstream populations (Bronner, 2017).
Folktales also provide an opportunity for teachers and teacher researchers to expose school age and postsecondary students to experience other lands and cultures that reflect these individuals (Virtue, 2007).

Folktales can also serve as professional development material for teaching cultural diversity standards and meeting student learning outcomes set by institutions (Ahi et al., 2014; Hohr, 2013; Hurt & Callahan, 2013; Lwin, 2016; Oli, 2016). As cultural artifacts, folktales afford a platform for class discourse and discussion. For example, Virtue (2007) analyzed Danish folktales and four variables representative of Danish culture. The purpose of the analysis was to evaluate the content of Danish folktales with contemporary Danish culture (Virtue, 2007). Cultural themes expressed in folktales can represent a historical timeline for students learning human relations and experiences. Using four examples of Danish culture, Virtue (2007) evaluated equality, social responsibility, cooperation, and compassion. By examining the content of Danish folklore stories and contemporary Danish life, the author was able to tailor resources for classroom instruction (Virtue, 2007).

Using folktales as a cultural artifact from history and relating the tale to the people that represent that culture today requires causation (Bronner, 2017; Chaudhri & Teale, 2013; Kim, Guang-Lea Lee, & Bach, 2018; Nhung, 2016). The CBC diversity committee devoted the efforts to evaluate published trade books that correlate both culture and folktale in order to formulate process, knowledge, and progress in representing positive and enlightening experiences for student learning (CBC, 2017). The NCSS, in collaboration with the CBC, furnished 15 years of annotated biographies systematically listed by year and numerically correlated with the ten thematic strands of national curriculum standards (CBC, 2015; NCSS, 2010). Under the category of folktales, global examples of diverse cultures are presented. The examples include various
cultures throughout the world not just cultures currently residing in the United States (NCSS, 2017). Global examples allow for curriculum and professional development using folktales from around the world in alignment with standards for teaching specific courses in college-level social science classes (Villar et al., 2013). More specifically, this permits the development of curriculum choices in the teaching of human growth and development across the lifespan for the integration of cultural narratives not included in text-based courses (Skinner & Howes, 2013).

Presented below are examples of the cultural diversity of notable social studies trade books for young people.

In DeSpain’s (1999) *The Emerald Lizard: Fifteen Latin American Tales to Tell in English and Spanish*, translated by Mario Lamo-Jimenez for English, brought a bilingual representation of folktales through myths and legends of the diverse culture of Latin America. The folktales portrayed the vast land and diversity of cultures both past and present. Many of the tales presented in this book were unfamiliar to American students. This book was listed as one of the folktale trade books on the 2000 list of notable trade books for social studies (NCSS, 2017). Countries embodied through tales included the Incan people of Ecuador and Peru, Guatemala, Uruguay, Chile, and Brazil. This novel, written in prose storytelling, provided choices to include in curriculum and diversity of organization for structured lesson plans. The author, Pleasant DeSpain, (1999) described his love of Latin America starting in the 1970s and deciding to write stories traveling throughout the country. He described meeting a Huichol Indian and hearing an ancient tale as he bought a traditional bolsa bag. DeSpain recounted saying, “The old man smiled and, through his grandson, told me the oldest story he knew of the mythic Huichol version of the deluge” as he said, “The oldest should walk first into the story bah” (introduction, para. 1).
In the traditional tale of Hasidic legend, Author Eric Kimmel retold the story in *Gershon’s Monster: A story for the Jewish New Year* (2000). This story dates back to the twelfth century and is still practiced in Jewish communities today. The story explained the practice of repentance in Jewish culture and described how the character Gershon dispensed his sins in the sea. At the request of the Rabbi, for Gershon’s plea for children, twins were born and played at the very beach in which he threw his sins. Will the twins be saved as the monsters of sin rise? This story provided teachers with lessons of religious practices that are taught in childhood and continue through the lifespan. This story incurred religious narrative often representative of Jewish culture. This book was added to the Notable Social Studies trade book list in 2001 (NCSS, 2017).

The author known for Native American storytelling, Joseph Bruchac told the story of anger and pride through Native folktale in *How Chipmunk got his Stripes* (2001). Added to the Notable Social Studies trade book list in 2002, this timeless tale was told through the eyes of animals. This native tale, told from an environmental perspective using human emotions, was expressed through the indigenous animals of a bear and squirrel. The little squirrel challenged the bragging bear to stop the sun from rising. As it began to rise, little squirrel commented and the bear’s portrayal of human anger caused a lash of the claw. The little squirrel was ceremoniously turned into a chipmunk. This Native American tale symbolized similar stories told through Cherokee, Alonaki, and Mohawk oral stories. This folktale can be used to describe emotional intelligence development in early childhood.

Born and raised in the Scandinavian country of Norway, storyteller Lisa Lunge-Larson (1999) retold nine stories of the infamous creatures known as Trolls. The trade book that made the NCSS list in 2000 called, *The Troll with no heart in his body and other tales of trolls from*
Norway, described human and troll interaction. The author discussed the history of troll lore and its tradition of oral and written cultural, historical significance in Norwegian culture. This book was listed for grades 2 through 5. Norwegian tales from this book were accompanied by introductions of cultural, historical information that can provide theoretical implications of childhood development through family dynamics. The tales are often violent and have been used to teach lessons of whom to trust and the development of autonomy and industry.

Robert D. San Souci’s African American novel retold the story of a childless couple and two white stones in *The Secret of the Stones* (2000). This African-American folktale included drawings depicting the couple’s journey after finding the stones and bringing them into their home. This book was on the NCSS trade book list for social studies in 2001. The story is based on the accumulation of previous tales combining Arkansas folklore and Bantu African traditional lore. Through his research, San Souci (2000) traced this folklore to its African genesis, changing only objective descriptors in this present edition. A combination of American culture during tenant farming with African traditional magic brought two cultures together in this American children’s book.

In this typical fairy tale story, *At the Wish of the Fish: A Russian Folktale*, Lewis (1999) retold a classic Russian folktale. The NCSS (2010) added the notable trade book to the list in 2000. This children’s book was listed for ages six through nine. This cultural tale was characteristic of agrarian plots describing the poor fisherman and his love of a king’s daughter. As with many tales, magic presented itself through an animal. In this tale, the magical animal was a pike. The storyline was filled with developmental theories found in early childhood. The main character was presented as lazy and foolish. The character used the fish to grant wishes and
control. This notable trade book based on traditional Russian culture offered examples of emotional developmental discussions for students in human growth and development courses.

The title, *The Rabbit’s Tail: A story from Korea* (Han, 1999) is retold by author Suzanne Crowden Han. This Korean folktale was drenched in multicultural themes of moral tradition and lessons of social interaction. Appropriate for ages five through eight, this notable trade book was listed in 2000 (NCSS, 2000). This children’s book granted examples of social concepts of interpretation and interpersonal communication. In this Korean folktale, common cultural animals were used to describe good and bad identities. This notable trade book transcribed Korean culture in early childhood through socio-cultural and emotional development.

Margaret Real McDonald’s *Tanjur Tanjur Tanjur* (2012) was a revisited Palestinian folktale, circling the storyline of a woman wanting a child. The word tanjur means cooking pot in Arabic. Her prayers were answered with a magical pot. This notable trade book was added to the list of folktales in 2007 (NCSS, 2007). The children’s book was filled with themes of parenting, moral development, and life lessons for children ages six through 10 and grades K-5. This children’s book described and explained theories of cognitive development through animism and egocentrism and correlated with theories describing several early childhood cognitive thinkers such as Piaget (1970) and Vygotsky (1978).

In 2015, the NCSS added to the folktales category, *Cinderella Stories Around the World: 4 Beloved Tales* (2015). Meister’s (2015) was the only book listed under folktales for 2015. Despite holding the single position, it is a multicultural children’s book spanning four different cultures: France, Canada, China, and Egypt. This children’s book reflects one of the most told tales within the folklore genre, Cinderella. This notable trade book brought four different continents together and incorporated the thematic strand of culture with similar language and
artifacts of cultural diversity. Even though recommended for ages five through seven and grades K-2, this book still has theoretical implications for students taking human growth and development. Curriculum and instruction focused on correlating similar themes in the dynamics of family and social interactions can be woven into lectures studying early childhood.

This literature review thus far provided a sampling of quality trade books for children recommended under the guidelines of the National Curriculum for Social Studies (NCSS, 2010). The books highlighted here gave examples of the expansive illustration of culture and cultural diversity. The NCSS (2010) offers detailed standard guidelines for curriculum development and integration using children’s trade books. Even though the NCSS book lists are recommended for K-8 reading levels, they provide opportunities to post-secondary instructors looking to integrate literature in human growth and development. This study integrated a cultural fairy tale selected from an NCSS notable trade book. This action research study aligned with cultures discussed in the early childhood development chapters of the assigned text for the human growth and development course. Under the support of Vygotskian (1978) sociocultural theory, the fairy tale was chosen reflecting the thematic strand of culture and listed under the folktale category. Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development, social interaction, and private speech were explored through intertwined themes found within the cultural narratives for this study (Altun & Yucel-Toy, 2015; Ebersole et al., 2016; Gundogdu, 2015; Poehner, Zhang, & Lu, 2015). The cultures listed in the assigned textbook (Papalia & Martorell, 2015) required for this course and discussed in the early childhood chapter include Western European (United States), Scandinavian (Danish/Norwegian), Anglo-Saxon (British/Welsh), and Asian (Chinese). This action research study selected fairy tales from children’s trade books approved by the NCSS (2017) because of their history, systematic vetting, and collaboration with the CBC. Other studies have included a
broad spectrum of literature depending on the nature of the course and curriculum intent (Field, 2003; Landis-Groom, 1996), but none as comprehensive as the NCSS.

As this literature review indicated, many examples of diverse cultures throughout the years have been implemented into the National Council for Social Studies notable trade books in cooperation with the Children’s Book Council (NCSS, 2017; CBC, 2017). Books thoroughly and strategically checked for standards meeting NCSS thematic strands made the list. A committed process ensures books were placed under the broad categories based on guidelines set by both organizational committee members (NCSS, 2017; CBC, 2017). Throughout the years, numerous cultures, both in the United States and abroad, were added to represent folktales including folklore, myths, mythology, and fairy tales. Folktales may provide insight to cultures of the past and continuing cultural themes in the modern tradition, having originated in oral tradition. Folktales became an appreciated resource for educators developing curriculum and instruction to meet institutional standards. Each year, the NCSS (2016) diversity committee provides opportunities for the promotion and sale of books accessible to professional educators. This organization places importance on the level of multiculturalism during book selection based on books published the previous year. Social studies educators depend on the Notable Social Studies trade books to be assorted to all social studies grade levels. Standards set forth by the NSCC for social studies offers an assessable framework for curriculum design for professional development for teachers K-12 and college professors (NCSS, 2017). The thematic strands set by the NCSS (2017) also provide a model for educators using the social constructivist framework (Wass & Golding, 2014).

Teacher-researchers taking the position of sociocultural theory use subjects and material in curriculum and instruction course design (Bersh, Benton, Lewis, & McKenzie-Parrales, 2012;
Toom, 2013). The development or restructuring of a course integrating literature may take collaborative perspectives (Williams & Kolupke, 1986; Lushchevska, 2014). Specific subject matter disciplines use the social constructivist model for current education reform (Barnett, 2011; Hawkins, et al., 2015; Lunenburg, 2011; Sarraj, Bene, Li, & Burley, 2015). In the mid to late 1980s, around the same time as action research was repackaging itself as a viable method in schools (McKay, 1992; Simms, 2013), several teacher researchers were developing courses integrating literary works as part of curriculum design (Barnett, 2011; Levine, 1984; Williams & Kolupke, 1986). Levine (1984) looked at course construction from a perspective of using the disciplines of psychology and English. Levine (1984) developed a course curriculum taking psychological theories and integrating specific pieces of literature. The issues in this proposed study focused on what types of literature would be used and if the literature could explain, mediate, and support concepts of early childhood cognitive development (Chen, 2012; Leal, 2015; Levine, 1984; Rainville & Gordh, 2016; VisikoKnox-Johnson, 2016).

Using the principles of action research (Jaipal & Figg, 2011; McKay, 1992), Levine (1984) planned outlines to take action, observe, and reflect for course design. Designing a psychology course integrating literature opened the door for numerous possibilities. The main task was developing a reading list in correlation with specific psychological theories based on the assigned textbook. Williams, a psychology teacher and Kolupke, an English teacher, addressed similar issues in a study. Their main concern in the process of curriculum planning dealt with broad categories of historical and cultural issues relating to psychology and literature (Williams & Kolupke, 1986). Both studies addressed the scientific aspect of human behavior and intertwining the humanistic element of literature as cultural signs and tools (Vygotsky, 1971). Levine (1984) concluded with outlines tackling issues of human perception, mental illness,
personality, and the effects of early childhood experience. Novels were integrated based on specific themes to answer theoretical questions. For example, Levine proposed a question focusing on the good and evil of people. Using Golding’s (1954) novel *Lord of the Flies*, psychological questions directed towards good or evil were integrated into class discourse and discussion.

The second outline in Levine’s (1984) study centered on the general theme of socialization. Here was where the question of culture and the influence of culture, about relationships, family, and mindsets of people across cultures, was addressed. This psychological question was integrated with the E. M. Forster’s (1924) novel, *A Passage to India*. Williams and Kolupke (1986) took a different theoretical approach, concentrating on characterization in literature. This approach permitted opportunities to scaffold psychological theories with characters as both protagonists and antagonists. This study concluded with reflective feedback related to the psychological analysis of human behavior and literary tools (Vygotsky, 1971) as timeless cultural artifacts. These studies demonstrated the ability to create courses through interdisciplinary divisions of psychology and English. The curriculum development of these studies showed the connections between scaffolding cultural artifacts of literature with the current psychological material (Hawkins, et al., 2015; Rainville & Gordh, 2016). In Fernald’s (1987) article “Of Windmills and Rope Dancing: The Instructional Value of Narrative Structure,” the teacher-researcher used fictional story within an introductory textbook. By presenting a narrative within the pages of a textbook, the potential for increased retention among college students may increase, according to Fernald (1987). This study was different from the studies mentioned earlier as it related directly to the theoretical frameworks of a textbook organization (Fernald, 1987).
Literature adds curiosity and interest when learning about theories and other forms of instruction in courses (Bersh et al., 2012; Boyatzis, 1992; Chen, 2012; Fernald, 1987; Hohr, 2013; Kulikovskaya & Andrienko, 2016; & Levine, 1984; Lushchevska, 2014; Williams & Kolupke, 1986). It also provided perspectives, and it allowed students to evaluate past the theory presented or thinking past the research presented in chapters. Literature offers students an opportunity to experience what they would not usually be able to experience unless they were in that specific social context (Chen, 2012; Farris & Fuhler, 1994; Lyngnes, 2016; McGowan & Guzzetti, 1991; Sarraj et al., 2015). In a course taught at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, students and the professor examined the question that centered on perception, behavior, and how cultural assumptions influence how people see the world (Landis-Groom, 1996). The instructor in this study took the role as a catalyst in presenting different viewpoints in order to inspire a second look at how one’s perception about their own culture directly effects or reinforces the perception of others. This viewpoint stressed the fundamental idea of democracy in education classrooms and the ability to explore cultural diversity. This study consisted of questionnaires given at the beginning and end of the course. The students were also provided with definitions of both culture and nature. Two novels were integrated into the study; Travels (Crichton, 1988) and Ota Benga: The Pygmy in the Zoo (Bradford & Blume, 1992). The teacher-researcher in the study alluded to the fact that academic settings may specialize in certain areas and, therefore, limit the student’s perception of the outside world (Landis-Groom, 1996). Results reflected the voices of students not only as American culture, but the student’s perception from different cultures and their different adjustments to Western ideology. This study extended the research into curriculum and instruction to critical assumptions in perceived cultural knowledge. Lickteig and Danielson (1995) contended, “The use of story and the linking of a known to an unknown
culture provide both emotional involvement with culture and aid in developing children’s global awareness” (p. 7).

Fiction and nonfiction literature were used for many years as supplemental instruction and as a support to textbooks (McGowan & Guzzetti, 1991; Toom, 2013). This strategy enlightens students to venture beyond the words in a textbook and encourage reading (Pittman & Honchell, 2014). Textbooks are often more research-oriented for post-secondary courses and classrooms (McGowan & Guzzetti, 1991; Skinner & Howes, 2013; Toom, 2013; Williams & Kolupke, 1986). Textbooks delineate information to students based on theories and major theoretical frameworks to support research (Skinner & Howes, 2013). Adding literature or narratives based on cultures that were mentioned in assigned textbooks students were reading, especially students in the United States, provided opportunities for discourse and discussion (McGowan & Guzzetti, 1991). By asking the questions, “what do you think about the research in the book?” and “what do you know about the culture that the research discusses?” (Boyatzis, 1992; Hawkins, et al., 2015; McGowan & Guzzetti, 1991; Meyerson, 2006; Toom, 2013), a platform for discourse in specific courses, like human growth and development, is created. College instructors can use research to teach concepts beyond what was given in the book (Boyatzis, 1992; Levine, 1984; Skinner & Howes, 2013; Virtue, 2007; Williams & Kolupke, 1986).

Teacher-researchers can provide more detail about cultural lives through cultural artifacts of narratives (Donne, 2016; McGowan & Guzzetti, 1991; Vygotsky, 1971). Thus, literature is also more accessible. Authors have choices compared to text-based books and text-driven courses (McGowan & Guzzetti, 1991). Literature was more accessible for teachers to select and add variety, depending on the cultures that were mentioned (Hawkins, et al., 2015). Teacher-
researchers also have the avenue to include or introduce cultures not mentioned in assigned texts. Stories and narratives through literature, specifically stories chosen by the NCSS (2017), provide students with an ability to look at natural and familiar mediums close to their own culture (Chaudhri & Schau, 2016; Virtue, 2007). By integrating cultural folktales, students gain ideas about the historical culture that has transcended throughout human civilization (Kim, 2016). Most folktales deal with early childhood and lessons about growing up via morals and values (Bettelheim, 2010; Bronner, 2017; Virtue, 2007; Vygotsky, 1971; Zipes, 2012). Folktales support opportunities for instructors to present research theories and frameworks discussed in assigned textbooks and to look at the power folktales have on emotional, cognitive, and sociocultural domains (Bronner, 2017; McGowan & Guzzetti, 1991; Virtue, 2007; Zipes, 2012). Further, folktales not only center on some social or cultural lesson but on how qualitative development occurred in that given environment (Lwin, 2016; Propp, 2015; Uther, 2011).

Folktales, through integration, grant the pedagogical podium to enrich specific courses as human growth and development supported by the theoretical framework of Vygotsky’s theory of social-cultural development (Aas, 2014; Hawkins et al., 2015; Hurt & Callahan, 2013; Shabani, 2016; Worthington & van Oers, 2017). The cyclic method of action research provided the opportunity to explore the integration of a cultural fairy tale in a human growth and development course. The framework of Vygotskian sociocultural theory supported this exploration to make connections between human development and the social-cultural artifacts of folktales through differences and commonalities of cultural diversity (Hawkins et al., 2015).

**Chapter Summary**

The literature review in this chapter provided the reader with the canvas of Vygotsky’s social constructs, NCSS’s outline of the projected picture and Lewin’s action research as the
medium. The review followed the works by Vygotsky to the longitudinal lines of culture, cultural self and categorical use of tool and sign. These components summarized Vygotsky’s cultural framework in the origin of the cultural development of the child (1978). The literature review expounded the overall purpose and literary significance of works approved by the NCSS (2017). Beneath the specific themes, the researcher reviewed NCSS guidelines and suggested courses for instruction. The literature review also provided examples of Notable Social Science trade books (NCSS, 2017) reviewed for teachers, educators, schools and communities. The following chapter details the method of action research under the lens of Vygotsky sociocultural theory, including descriptions of trustworthiness, and triangulation.
Chapter 3: Procedures and Methods

The purpose of this action research study was to integrate a cultural fairy tale into a human growth and development class (HGD) as one way to promote concepts of cultural diversity. This study used the method of action research within the framework of Vygotskian sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978).

The following overarching theory based question was answered in this study: How will integrating a cultural fairy tale into a college-level HGD class promote concepts of cultural diversity? The following problem based secondary research questions included:

**RQ1:** How can sign, tool, and mediation be used as a medium to communicate a cultural fairy tale to enhance cultural diversity in an HGD class?

**RQ2:** How does the use of a cultural fairy tale in an HGD class explain the cognitive processes in early childhood development?

**RQ3:** How is a cultural fairy tale used to scaffold concepts of cultural diversity in an HGD class?

Chapter 3 begins with an overall background of action research as a qualitative research method for this study. The sections that follow describe the site selection, population, and participant selection. A brief discussion on ethical issues related to study participants and requirements for the IRB is followed by information about data sources, protocols/instrumentation, field-testing, collection procedures, and researcher positionality. The last section of this chapter discusses the use of trustworthiness/rigor, data analysis techniques, and a description of the coding process for this study. The chapter summary reflects the organization of the sections discussed in this chapter in preparation for Chapter 4, the results.
Research Design

Researchers in the fields of education and social science work within three methodologies: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method. For this research, the teacher-researcher chose a qualitative method. This method of research proposes an exploration into a variety of settings, therefore, granting permission to ask what, how, when, where, and why about human behavior (Berg & Lune, 2012; Butler-Kisber, 2010; Creswell, 2013; Guba, 1981). Qualitative research permits the researcher to become a field observer, emerging in a multitude of settings. (Berg & Lune, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Zeni, 1998). Researchers search for symbolic meanings through interactions of people, groups, and collectives (Berg & Lune, 2012). Unlike quantitative methods that impose numerical values upon what is being studied, qualitative studies seek to understand the variables and their meaning (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Creswell, 2013; Guba, 1981). Researchers view individuals studied as participants, not numerical objects. This research method is the essence of quality through narratives of the individuals, groups, and collectives being studied and, therefore, more flexible to adaptation (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative methods are not without weakness in the process of intent. For example, variables studied in this method are not as defined as in quantitative studies. Variables relate to the setting or settings being studied and are more transparent. The variables in quantitative methods are well defined by numerical value and allow the study of changes through cause and effect (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative methods are not always generalizable towards other populations or settings. Interpretation of data is reliant on the researcher’s perspectives of data, not statistical programs that account for each measure (Guba, 1981). Documentation is grounded in the researcher’s reflexivity and draws on subjective perspectives. With this stated, qualitative method was still the best approach to the purpose of this action research study. Qualitative
methods also aligned with the theoretical framework of this study. Vygotskian sociocultural theory is founded on the mediation of tool and sign between people, groups, and collectives (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Creswell, 2013) thus supporting the aim of action research when addressing the pedagogical practice of teachers becoming researchers (Mills, 2003). Action research framed in the method of qualitative research granted this teacher-researcher the justification of studying inside the classroom instead of being an outside observer (Zeni, 1998).

As the chosen sub-type design, action research allowed exploration of the culturally diverse environments and provided a compendium to the socially constructed participants (Barnett, 2011; Lewin, 1997/1939, 1997/1945; McKay, 1992; Simms, 2013; Stanley, 1995). Action research as a method of design portrayed the potential to increase dynamic group understanding and possible action of change. This type of method gained popularity in the late 1980s to early 1990s as qualitative research became popular among the disciplines of education (Aas, 2014; Helskog, 2014; Jaipal & Figg, 2011; McKay, 1992; Stenhouse, 1988). Thirty years ago, researcher Lawrence Stenhouse (1988) proposed educational research that would grant teachers the opportunity to reflect on teaching positions and methods. Stenhouse (1988) articulated the abilities of teachers as autonomous professionals, knowing the art of teaching itself. Action research as a form of educational research intertwines the art of teaching with the skills of research. Action research grants researchers the ability to re-examine diverse settings such as school classrooms and provide valuable information to professional development curriculum (Helskog, 2014; Hong & Lawrence, 2011).

Teacher-researchers conducting action research take the position of an insider, whether in their classroom or other classrooms. Action research allows teacher researchers and school officials to make pedagogical decisions based on observation and reflection (Simms, 2013).
Teachers participate in their classroom daily using action to observe, reflect, and plan ways to expand student learning beyond the pages of text (Helskog, 2014; Hong & Lawrence, 2011; Jaipal & Figg, 2011; Mohr, 2001). Participatory action research (PAR) is a subfield of action research gaining attention in the field of education (Helskog, 2014). This type of action research is a process of an active social investigation involving all stakeholders in the problem and considers all social contexts in which people are intertwined with others (MacDonald, 2012). This subfield is cyclical and provides teacher-researchers with a methodology of evaluating pedagogical practice when there are changing classroom participants (Helskog, 2014; Kidd & Kral, 2005; MacDonald, 2012). The PAR addresses the needs of the participants and therefore transfers to comparable social contexts (Jacobs, 2016; MacDonald, 2012).

This PAR method surrounds the simplicity of environments where groups congregate. Action research applies to virtually any type of environment when monitoring specific behavior. This method promotes cyclical responses based in reflective acts of all individuals and contexts studied. Further, this method promotes feedback and suggestion on the priorities of the presenting issues (Helskog, 2014; Lewin, 1997/1945). The qualitative nature of action research emboldens action relationships in thick rich description (Aas, 2014; Geertz, 1973; McKay, 1992).

This research method is not without controversy within the empirical domains of research. Action research may result in limitations due to the nature of the process (Helskog, 2014). Action research is limited to the group studied. Implying similar results to other groups reduces the value of transferability. However, transferability to other social contexts strengthens this qualitative approach (Guba, 1981; Helskog, 2014). Group behavior can only be indicated by the problem studied (Lewin, 1997/1939, 1997/1945). The dynamics of a particular group studied
can progress with participant’s views. Action research provides valuable information for groups presenting similar behaviors or concerns with similar group dynamics. There are also strengths and weakness in using action research for this proposed study.

This section begins with the strengths of using action research for this study. Action research is cyclical, active, and reflective as a research method. Action research can be collaborative, giving opportunities for teachers to work together. Action research places importance on creating an effective action to observe and resolve problems and skills in practice (Hine, 2013). Action research provides teachers with a platform to expand and relate existing knowledge (Helskog, 2014) with students in specific fields. Teachers can investigate practice in new ways. This method supports acquiring an understanding of materials and practices within the classroom. Teacher-researchers can adopt what works best in collaboration with other professionals teaching similar subjects. Teachers are more committed when they can become researchers (Aas, 2014; Helskog, 2014; Hong & Lawrence, 2011; Stenhouse, 1988) inside the process, not from the post-positivist insight (Helskog, 2014). Action research and PAR gain strength through identifying areas of problematic change, ongoing cyclical change, and providing a means to professional development (Helskog, 2014).

Teachers as researchers make pedagogical decisions about material and activities in their classrooms (Steele, 2012). The weakness lies in determining what role to take without changing the social context of the study. A weakness of using action research relates to the variable roles played by the teacher-researcher. The participatory nature of action research requires the teacher researcher to be both participant and facilitator in the study. As a participant in the study, the teacher-researcher plays a participant role when conducting the research collaboratively (Mills, 2003). The collaborative teacher is responsible for reflection of the process in the social context.
The teacher-researcher becomes observed, and that may weaken the study. The collaborators’ reflections may not be consistent with research questions under study (Mills, 2003).

Another side of the same weakness is the role of the teacher-researcher as a facilitator (Mills, 2003). The teacher-researcher facilitates the class activities that meet the primary purpose of the study. The role of facilitator researcher may shift in order to guide the participants in response to the research questions proposed (Steele, 2012). Regardless of the strengths and weaknesses, action research still presents a diverse field to explore the social context of the classroom and teaching practices. It is appropriate for both teacher-researcher and collaborator to explore the best practice of specific subjects such as HGD (Steele, 2012).

As described in the paragraphs above, action research is ideally suited for research in educational environments. Given that the purpose of this qualitative study was to integrate a cultural fairy tale in a college-level HGD class, action research as the design provided this teacher-researcher the flexibility to plan, observe, act, and reflect (Mills, 2003) on ways to promote concepts of cultural diversity.

Action research as a conceptual theory provided a vast canvas for teacher educators, teacher-researchers, and administrators to evaluate a process (Aas, 2014; Steele, 2012; Zambo, 2015). Teacher-researchers and educators use the method of action research as a means to re-evaluate pedagogical practices within the classroom, school, and community (Aas, 2014). Action research is real time; in other words, it is the present. Teacher-researchers have the opportunity to involve anyone in the process of the classroom including students, parents, school officials, and communities (Hine, 2013; O’Connor et al., 2006).
Site Selection

The site is a college that is part of the 28 public colleges in the state of Florida and one of seven that offers Bachelor Degrees (Association of Florida Colleges, 2018). The college offers numerous vocational programs as well as Associates in Arts and Science Degrees. The college operates six satellite campuses throughout the regional area in addition to the 264-acre main campus. The college has a current population of 6,708 students. There are 2,677 full-time and 4,031 part-time students. Student/faculty ratio at this college is 21:1 compared to the state ratio of 38:1. Almost half (48.5%) are under 21 years old. Three-fourths of students report their race as white. However, diversity at this college has grown by 15% over the past five years. About 58% of students are female. This college offers several programs for low-income students to successfully attend and earn a degree (College Factual, n.d.).

This study was conducted at the main campus. All major programs, including medical programs, reside at this campus. The students taking HGD were fulfilling one three-hour general education course. The state requires a total of 36 hours of general education. All general education course requirements are assessed by SLOs. The teacher-researcher and the collaborative teacher have access to all campuses as full-time professors. The teacher-researcher is located full-time at one of the satellite campuses but still assigned to the main campus of this college.

In the research site’s catalog year of 1969/1970, the HGD course was added as part of the social science curriculum. For over 48 years, human growth and development was offered as an elective and for programs requiring this course as a pre-requisite. In 2015/2016 calendar year, human growth and development was moved to the general education degree plan under Behavioral Social Science (Appendix B). The HGD course is offered at the main campus and
several of the satellite campuses, as well as an online course through the e-campus program. The course is text driven and requires students to purchase the text material from the college bookstore or directly from the publication site.

The Behavioral Social Science category follows set guidelines for the measurement of student learning outcomes. All students taking courses in this category complete activities/exams that reflect a measure of the SLOs during the designated semester period. The college where this study took place requires a syllabus for each course assigned to the teacher. The syllabus requires mandatory statements based on college policies. Protocols for completion of this course are stated in the syllabus and determined by the teacher. The teacher-researcher and the teacher collaborator use open-ended formats in lectures and discussions. A course schedule is provided at the end of the syllabus for students to prepare for class discussions, in-class activities, and scheduled times for testing. The human growth and development course follows the seven stages of human development discussed in the assigned text. This action research study occurred in the chapter on early childhood cognitive development. Using this course and chapter was ideal for studying the current problem because children are increasing language skills within specific cultures (Vygotsky, 1962). This action research study on early childhood cognitive development aligns with the constructs of sign, tool, mediation, ZPD, and scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978).

Participants

The participants in this study were students enrolled in an HGD class during the 2018 spring semester. Demographically, the enrolled students were representative of the larger student body of the college, including full and part-time students, general education or professional program students, and students of all ages. It was expected that approximately 58% of the class was female based on student population demographics (College Factual, n.d.). Considering
educational attainment, students at this college will likely earn an Associate of Science, Associate of Arts, or Bachelor of Arts degree.

In order to be admitted to this college, students must submit either ACT or SAT scores or take the Post Education Readiness Test. Transfer students are accepted anytime during the calendar school year. All transcripts are evaluated for course credit toward programs at this college. High school and GED transcripts are required. This college accepts international education students; the process for admission of foreign transfer students requires the same process of evaluated transcripts to meet course standards. Unless continuing to a bachelor’s degree program, the length of attendance at this college averages between two to three years and is dependent on full-time or part-time status. The Associate of Arts degree requires 60 credit hours to meet state standards and transfer to universities in the state of Florida. Students planning to enter the nursing program at this college are required to take HGD the first semester of attendance. The population of students taking HGD classes reflected the population of diverse students attending this college. Overall, there was no reason to believe the study participants would be demographically different from the college student population.

**Participant Selection**

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants for this study (Berg & Lune, 2012). The purposive method of homogeneous sampling narrowed the range and variation of the intended participant selection. Efron and Ravid (2013) stated, “Qualitative action research does not have a formulated set of rules about the size sample or how it is selected” (p. 62). Sample selection in action research was based on relevancy to the actions studied and to action types that reflect the actual size of groups selected (Berg & Lune, 2012; Jaipal & Figg, 2011; Kidd & Kral, 2005; Mills, 2003).
Variations in qualitative research can range from one to four or four to 20 participants contingent on the sampling method (Berg & Lune, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Efron & Ravid, 2013). This homogeneous sampling method determined the participants based on students enrolled in the collaborative teacher’s HGD class. The process of this sampling method relied on individuals or groups specific to an area of potential study. The selection process related to the availability and commitment of participants. Homogeneous sampling systematically focuses on knowledge through communication and reflection of specific areas of study (Palinkas et al., 2015). Based on the homogeneous sampling method, an HGD class scheduled for the collaborative teacher was chosen before the start of the 2018 spring semester. Two HGD sections were offered at the main campus during the 2018 spring semester. The collaborative teacher had one scheduled HGD class on Monday/Wednesday and one scheduled class on Tuesday/Thursday. The teacher-researcher collected data in the Tuesday/Thursday HGD section. All HGD classes offered at the main campus are limited to 30 students according to the institution and building policies. Registration at this college continued through the first week of the semester. All classes at this college closed when drop/add was over. Purposive sampling was the most appropriate selection method as students could enroll in the HGD courses at the college or online.

The process to identify the class was based on how many classes of HGD were offered at the main campus and those classes scheduled for the teacher collaborator. Since the teacher-researcher who conducted this study is a full-time teacher with scheduled classes, a decision was made to use the Tuesday/Thursday HGD class for data collection. The teacher-researcher met with the teacher collaborator to discuss permission to use the class for data collection. Once the decision was made between the teacher-researcher and the teacher collaborator, the time frame for data collection was dependent on IRB permission. The teacher collaborator had 29 students
registered for this class. Twenty-five students were 18 years of age and over and eligible to participant in the study. A homogeneous sampling of students taking HGD represented the knowledge and experience of AA Degree seeking or pre-professional majors at this college and was, therefore, an appropriate selection method.

**Ethical Issues/Permissions**

The teacher collaborator whose class was used to conduct this study is a full-time professor with a doctorate in educational psychology. The teacher collaborator is qualified to teach all psychology courses at this college including HGD courses. One ethical issue in this study dealt with students enrolled in the HGD course under the age of 18. The college has two programs in which individuals under the age of 18 can enroll. In order for minors to participate, the teacher-researcher must obtain parental consent and child assent as well as a full board review (University of West Florida Institutional Review Board). Given the tight time frame allowed for data collection, it was determined that this research study would not include any participants under the age of 18.

The researcher of this study submitted IRB applications at the University of West Florida and the college where the study took place. Both applications were approved. The teacher-researcher who conducted this study completed the human participant training course through the National Institute of Health (Appendices C, D, and E). The collaborative teacher discussed the study with the students and requested signed informed consent for students interested in participating in the study. Consent forms were collected during this class time. While all forms were collected, only students who were at least 18 years of age and signed informed consent had data included in the study (Appendix F).
In reference to the ethical standards, it is the policy of universities and colleges to grant confidentiality for students participating in classroom investigations (Zeni, 2009). Classes at this college are closed classes, and all discussions within the classes are proprietary. Participants in this study were not identified by name when they gave feedback during class presentations. Names of students were not stated or noted during or after this study concluded. All notes and files were kept in a locked file in the office of the teacher-researcher. Participants were not allowed to view the notes of others during this research study. The content of the discussions in class was not discussed with anyone other than the participants in the classroom. All digital records were kept on a password-protected computer and in possession of the teacher-researcher.

This study included observations, open-ended questions during class presentations, and the fairy tale class activity. None of these activities posed any risk to the participants, as this is a routine class activity. The presentations posed no risk, as these are regular lectures that follow the assigned textbook. The activity integrating the fairy tale posed no risk as the chosen fairy tale was screened by the NCSS (2017) and the CBC for use as school material in K-20 classrooms. The content of all instruments, activity, and presentations posed no ethical risk to any participants in this study. The presentations/activities in this study benefited the participants due to the subject matter in which the participants would be measured for student learning outcomes at the end of the semester. There were no consequences for non-participation in this study.

**Data Sources**

The researcher used four data sources in the study. The sources included fairy tale analysis, Presentation/Activity 1, Presentation/Activity 2, and reflective journaling. Fairy tales as a data source represented the planning stage of action research (Mills, 2003). Since fairy tale analysis was a data source, this teacher-researcher identified potential fairy tales to be used in the
study. Fairy tale analysis is based on morphology or form. Fairy tales contain specific forms that follow a linear progression through the tale (Propp, 2015). This analysis permits fairy tales to be broken down into sequential parts for specific analysis dependent on the nature of why the fairy tale is being used (Zipes, 2012). One fairy tale from each culture identified in the textbook was selected from the NCSS (2000-2017). The cultures listed in the assigned text were Western European (United States), Scandinavian (Danish/Norwegian), Anglo-Saxon (British/Welsh), and Asian (Chinese). One advantage to using documents reviewed by the NCSS and CBC is it allowed for specialized screening of published material thus, removing researcher selection bias. The lack of selection bias enabled the teacher-researcher to acknowledge topics not discussed in the assigned text. Using published documents was an inexpensive means to address classroom populations. The fairy tales were unobtrusive and accessible to all audiences including students. A disadvantage of using original fairy tales centered on modern-day cultural norms and behaviors. The representation of the culture today may not be representative in the fairy tale from its cultural origin.

In-class presentations/activities were data sources that represented the action and observation stages of action research. Presentations consisted of two topics including the in-class activities as detailed in this chapter. One advantage of using presentations was the involvement of students. Presentations resembled regular class lectures and did not give the sense of being research. This data source was a way to present course material through diverse visual and auditory methods. The disadvantage of this data source lied in the skills of the facilitator. A good facilitator ensured depth of knowledge and understanding of material for data collection. Because the teacher-researcher has been teaching HGD courses for 19 years, the depth and understanding of knowledge were present.
Teacher-researchers using action research are in unique positions to design presentations that stimulate diverse discourse on assigned topics (Barnett, 2011), thus allowing for direct observation of students as active and passive participants. Observations were noted on the classroom seating map. The classroom seating map gave the teacher-researcher visual data points of movement (Mills, 2003). Students taking HGD courses at this college sat in seats of their choosing. The teacher collaborator was familiar with seating arrangements and noted any changes in seating during the presence of the teacher-researcher during the time of in-class presentations. The seating map provided a social milieu to action in the classroom and action after to reflect. An advantage to observations was on collecting data when the class was occurring, or activity was in progress. Another advantage focused on the ability to see participant behavior and hear their comments in real time. A disadvantage to this data source was the participants knowing observations were taking place. Since these observations were regular class activity, this disadvantage was reduced because students were used to being observed in class. Another disadvantage was observation bias by the teacher-researcher. Since the observations were taking place in the teacher collaborator’s classroom, the teacher-researcher had no prior experience and no expectations of the participants. No experience or expectations coupled with observations by both the teacher-researcher and teacher collaborator reduced bias.

Journaling was a data source that represented the reflection stage of action research (Mills, 2003). The teacher-researcher kept a journal in preparation for the presentation of the fairy tale activity in the designated HGD class. Journal entries in this study reflected the HGD class studied. One advantage was that keeping journal entries provided insight into narratives during and after class sessions (Mills, 2003). One disadvantage was the inability of the teacher-researcher to reflect on all social interactions. The teacher-researcher recorded reflections before,
during, and after the presentations and class activities to reduce this disadvantage. Reflective notes from the teacher-researcher were included as journal entries (Lyngsnes, 2016). Table 1 represents the triangulation of data sources and research questions.

Table 1

Triangulation of Research Questions and Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data 1</th>
<th>Data 2</th>
<th>Data 3</th>
<th>Data 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairy tale analysis</td>
<td>Presentation/Activity 1</td>
<td>Presentation/Activity 2</td>
<td>Journaling TR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ1: How can sign, tool, and mediation be used as a medium to communicate a cultural fairy tale to enhance cultural diversity in an HGD class?</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2: How does the use of a cultural fairy tale in an HGD class explain the cognitive processes in early childhood development?</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3: How is a cultural fairy tale used to scaffold concepts of cultural diversity in an HGD class?</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Description of Research Protocols/Instrumentation

The previous section stated all data sources that were used in this study. The data sources listed were a fairy tale, Presentation/Activity 1, Presentation/Activity 2, and reflective journaling. In order to collect data for this study, specific tools/instrumentations were used during the data collection. The first tool/instrumentation was the fairy tale that was used in this study. The fairy tale options for this study were selected from the most recent NCSS (2016) list. The fairy tale options also aligned with the culture thematic strand and were only two to three pages in length.
in order to read within the class presentation timeframe. The teacher-researcher purchased a copy of the book *Cinderella: 4 beloved tales* (Meister, 2015) online. The fairy tale identified in the book was “Little Burnt Face.” The fairy tale identified all five constructs used in this study. The copy of the book was the tool. The language used in the fairy tale was the sign, and the oral presentation of the fairy tale identified the ZPD and scaffolding. The fairy tale analysis used in this study was taken from Propp’s (2015) *Morphology of the folktale*. The copy of this book was purchased online.

Presentation/Activity 1 and Presentation/Activity 2 required the use of crayons, index cards, and pencils. These tools/instrumentations were used for all in-class activities during data collection. This tools/instrumentation provided the means by which the participants were directed during the presentation and met all constructs in this study. The presentation/activities were lectures created by this teacher-researcher. The pencil allowed participants to write down the fairy tale question and the crayons allowed students to draw the tool, sign, and mediation. The index cards also represented the tool for the collection of data for later analysis. The time for both presentation/activities was 75 minutes. The teacher-researcher who conducted this study reviewed all presentation/activities with the chair of the committee.

The last tool/instrumentation used was a composition notebook. This tool/instrumentation was used to journal all personal reflection from the teacher-researcher and to transfer responses from the index cards. The notebook was wide ruled, 200 pages, and easy to transport in the classroom for journaling both action during and action after. The teacher-researcher used this tool to make notes for the presentation/activities and lecture notes for quick review during data collection. This tool/instrumentation represents all five constructs of this study. The tool is the
composition notebook, the sign is the teacher-researcher’s reflections, and the constructs of ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) and scaffolding were lecture preparations for review.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Before data collection, the teacher-researcher first reviewed the most recent NCSS book list (2016). All the books went through a rigorous review by the NCSS review board and the CBC. All books submitted must meet the standards of human relations and diversity of groups (NCSS, 2016). Other criteria for book selection included originality of traditional stories, literary quality, and structured formatting relating to specific grade levels. For inclusion in the study, the first requirement was the book had to be in the culture theme of the list. Second, the book had to be listed under the folktales heading. Finally, the fairy tale had to be from Western European culture. In this year, the only fairy tale included that met all these requirements was “Little Burnt Face” from Cinderella: 4 beloved tales (Meister, 2015). The teacher-researcher read “little Burnt Face” (Meister, 2015) as selected by the participants.

Summary of action-symbols of fairy tales used for this research was based on the folktale interpretation of Propp’s (2015) morphology of the folktale. “Little Burnt Face” was coded for themes based on Propp’s 31 functions of the Dramatis Personae. The fairy tale used for this study was classified based on the Aarne-Thompson classification of Folk Tales (Uther, 2011). Reflective notes of this teacher-researcher about the morphology and classification of a fairy tale were identified before data collection for this study (Propp, 2015; Uther, 2011). The fairy tale in the original cultural text was a data point. All objects (tools) and language (signs) were identified based on the morphology of Propp (2015) before the in-class presentation.

The teacher-researcher was an active participant in the scheduled data collection presentations. The data collecting session consisted of two presentations/activities, and both
lasted approximately 75 minutes. Both presentations/activities were conducted on Tuesday with a time separation of one week. The first presentation/activity consisted of a review of the first stage of development, introduction to Vygotskian sociocultural theory, and Vygotskian constructs. The first presentation concluded with students choosing what culture they would like to hear a fairy tale based on the four cultures mentioned in the assigned chapter. The second data collecting presentation consisted of an oral presentation of a fairy tale, the in-class activity, and a conclusion of the culture in which the fairy tale originated and discussion of the cultural reference in the assigned textbook. The second presentation concluded the data collection procedures for this study. The teacher-researcher wrote journal entries after each presentation/activity.

The first presentation was a class discussion/lecture of early childhood cognitive development (ages 3-8). A review of the first stage of development briefly discussed the stage of infancy/toddler and the major developmental milestones of language (tool/sign) and the social contextual approach. The teacher-researcher introduced Vygotsky as discussed in Chapter 7 of the assigned textbook for this course. This 45-minute discussion included the sociocultural model and the constructs of ZPD and scaffolding. This discussion reviewed the constructs of tool, sign, and mediation. The teacher-researcher introduced participants to the concept and process of autobiographical memory in reference to cognitive development in children. This discourse led to an introduction using folktales as a way to scaffold children’s autobiographical memories. This teacher-researcher discussed the various forms of folktales: myth, legend, lore, fable, and fairy tales.

Fairy tales align with early childhood developmental cognition (Zipes, 2012). Fairy tales offer symbolic or language transference through different cultures. During early childhood
development (ages 3-8), children can grow language skills through the structure, plots, and characters in stories (Applebee, 1978). Children at this developmental age also increase interest in fantasy (Applebee, 1978; Bettelheim, 2010). At the end of the presentation, the teacher-researcher handed the participants an index card and asked them to identify a fairy tale with which they were most familiar. The participants were asked to identify what culture they thought this fairy tale originated in and then write that culture on the same index card. Index cards were collected, and the teacher-researcher reviewed and wrote the titles of the fairy tales on the board. Using the process of ZPD, this teacher-researcher asked participants to identify the original culture of the fairy tales written on the board. This process identified the ZPD of what participants know about the culture in which these fairy tales originated and what needed to be scaffolded. Based on participant feedback, the discussion focused on the cultural diversity of fairy tales and the importance of early childhood cognition. This discussion included the four cultures (Western European, Anglo Saxon, Scandinavian, and Asian) briefly mentioned in the textbook chapter on early childhood cognition.

The teacher-researcher asked participants, “If you had to listen to a fairy tale from one of the cultures mentioned in the assigned chapter, which culture would you choose?” The teacher-researcher asked the participants to put their heads down. The teacher-researcher verbally called out each culture and asked participants to raise their hands. By anonymous vote, the participants selected Western European.

The second presentation consisted of a quick review of the first lecture. An index card (tool) was distributed to each participant with a box of crayons (tool). The teacher-researcher read (mediation) the chosen fairy tale based on the culture chosen by the students. Participants were instructed (mediation) to draw an object (tool) from the fairy tale. Next, they were asked to
write a word (sign/symbol) on the index card that related to the object they just drew. Finally, the participants were asked to construct a sentence (mediation) that described both the object (tool) and word (sign/symbol) on their index card. Once this activity concluded, the teacher-researcher collected all index cards of participants in the study. The teacher-researcher discussed taking the object (tool), word (sign/symbol), and sentence (mediation) and analyzing the fairy tale based on their interpretation (scaffolding for students). This example demonstrated how children in the early childhood years construct autobiographical memory and concept construction using ZPD and scaffolding using stories. Fairy tales aid in child development by allowing children to act out and increase semantic meaning in language (Visioknox-Johnson, 2016; Zipes, 2012).

The teacher-researcher created the lesson plan presentations described above. Given the constraints of classroom scheduling, participants completed all activities in two class meetings (2.5 hours). The teacher-researcher also developed the observation protocol in the form of a classroom map. The presentations of this study took place in a designated classroom at the main campus of the college. The students sit at tables in the classroom. There are two chairs per table and five rows of table desks. Students can enter at the front or back of the classroom. There is audio and visual technology provided at the front of the classroom, plus a whiteboard for visual instruction. The fairy tale chosen for this study was not copied or distributed for the in-class activity and, therefore, no copyright permission was needed for this study. Student participants had the same required textbook for the HGD course.

Researcher Positionality

The teacher-researcher conducting this study was an active participant observer and was responsible for teaching human growth and development courses and all other responsibilities of college policy for successful student completion in HGD classes at this college. The teacher-
researcher is a full-time professor employed at this site for 15 years. This position gives her insider status to HGD courses offered at this college. However, she did not know any of the participants in the study nor did any of the participants seem familiar; like they were in a previous class or she had seen them at a school-related function. The life experiences of this teacher-researcher as an avid reader of all genres of folktales influenced the topic for this study. The teacher-researcher is a White, non-Hispanic female born and raised in the United States and of Scandinavian (Norwegian/ Danish) descent. The teacher-researcher who conducted this study is a doctoral candidate specializing in cultural diversity. The teacher-researcher sets positionality in the frame of what Guba (1981) described as validity through credibility/trustworthiness, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

**Ensuring Trustworthiness and Rigor**

Validity, reliability, and generalizability ensure the quality of this action research study. These concepts are traditionally recognized and aligned with the paradigm of quantitative research methods (Creswell, 2013; Mills, 2003). Numerical validation supports the purpose of quantitative research but may lack support for the justification of qualitative action research studies. Guba (1981) suggested concepts for qualitative research methods that align with the context of trustworthiness. Guba’s (1981) article “Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries” proposed an exchange of vernacular wording that fits researchers conducting different types of qualitative research. This process grants the teacher-researcher using the method of action research self-sacrifice of quality evaluation (Mills, 2003). Teacher-researchers conducting participatory action research value all voices in the action process (Creswell, 2013; Guba, 1981; Mills, 2003). The quantitative concepts of internal validity were replaced with credibility, external validity with transferability, reliability with dependability, and
objectivity with confirmability. According to Mills (2003), this provided a platform for teacher-researchers to evaluate their classroom context, not results based on context-free solutions.

Guba (1981) described the credibility of the researcher through accounts of time spent on site, observation, triangulation methods, and member feedback through interaction with participants and other professionals. The teacher-researcher ensured credibility through interactions with participants in discussions during class times. The teacher-researcher’s familiarity with the site increased internal validity of the research-setting, classroom, and student population. The teacher-researcher was present on campus four days a week to validate an understanding of classroom responsibilities. The teacher-researcher has taught at the main campus and was familiar with all classrooms where HGD courses are assigned. The teacher-researcher has observed students who are enrolled in HGD courses and has taught students in all degree plans at this college. Corroboration with colleagues granted opportunities to accept feedback and tested interpretation of action research reflection. Due to the nature of classroom interaction, students enrolled in the course had access to the teacher-researcher during office hours. Further, class interaction with participants about data validated the interpretation of fairy tale analysis with designated lectures.

Pedagogical practice should reflect the real environment in which students act on academic knowledge (Barnett, 2011; Hugg & Wurdinger, 2007). For action research studies, this related to the context of the classroom in which this study took place (Guba, 1981). Action research facilitated the construction of classroom social contexts and the disseminating of theoretical material from the text for possible comparison in the environment. This teacher-researcher teaches several courses on human growth and development throughout the year. This study provides future transferability to other courses in human growth and continued action
research studies identifying other stages of human lifespan development (Guba, 1981; Steele, 2012).

To ensure the dependability of this study, several aspects of consistency took place. The method of journaling reflected the teacher-researcher and feedback from teacher collaborator instead of just one data source of the teacher-researcher (Guba, 1981). The presentations presented a systematic process of stability and, therefore, increased dependability of the process. The teacher-researcher has presented different methods of delivery of lectures and conducted various activities that follow the required text material. The teacher-researcher teaches several classes of HGD and, therefore, has the opportunity to transfer what works and does not work from class to class. The teacher-researcher makes copies of all activities to evaluate what works for review for future presentation/activities. Providing an audit trail of previous presentation/activities increases the dependability of material for transferability to other HGD classes. The fairy tale used by the teacher-researcher provided an audit trail for future implementation of this class activity for verification as a dependable technique in other social contexts of HGD courses. Through data collection methods, responses from data points were compared to other data points in the study. In this action research study, data collection occurred before, during, and after the classroom presentation and activities. This teacher-researcher used qualitative analysis by color coding data to question the reflection of both personal and participant responses. Written descriptions from this teacher-researcher were recorded during all phases of this study. Through reflexive triangulation, this teacher-researcher analyzed for confirmability of data collected (Guba, 1981).
Data Analysis Techniques

After Presentation/Activity 1 and Presentation/Activity 2, the teacher-researcher completed a step-by-step process to record all action during and action after in the composition notebook. This technique allowed for the transference of the information from the index cards and reflective notes based on observation from the teacher-researcher.

Coding for data collection was established after the first presentation index card activity was administered. The first activity was recorded on an index card given to each participant in the study. The teacher-researcher also handed out pencils to participants to write the response to the question. Participants wrote responses on the index card and this was retrieved by the teacher-researcher when responses were recorded. All responses to the first index cards were transferred into the teacher-researcher’s journal. All fairy tales written on the index cards were organized and grouped by name. All fairy tales listed by name were color coded. Index cards were arranged by fairy tale frequency. Organizing by frequency and color coding allowed for reflection and data analysis.

Presentation/Activity 2 consisted of the same process of handing out an index card; this activity included a box of crayons. The fairy tale was read orally and instructions for the activity were presented to the participants. After the activity, the teacher-researcher collected all index cards. The techniques used for the second presentation comprised of taking each index card and arranging according to the construct of tool (object). A list of all objects (tools) and the word (sign) was organized based on frequency and noted in the teacher-researcher’s composition notebook for journal reflection.

Journal reflections by the teacher-researcher were coded at the end of the data collection process and after the journal entries were typed into an electronic document. Data analysis via
interpretation of the fairy tale (Propp, 2015) was included at the end of the in-class activity presentation. A coding theme was established to continue coding all material including in-class presentations, observations, reflective journaling, and fairy tale. Coding was updated as data collection procedures were implemented and as new themes, categories, and codes emerged. Coding for mediation was themed by sociocultural surroundings, cultural codes, mythical language, and symbolic messages during the discussion with participants once data collection for Presentation/Activity two was completed.

When all data collection procedures were completed, a revised coding template reflected all data points of this study. The five constructs identified in this study were discussed to ensure qualitative validity, reliability, and objectivity of this study. All data points collected were analyzed to indicate research questions. Journal narratives from the teacher-researcher reflected observations during presentations. Emerging themes of student narrative to fairy tale in-class activity reflected the central data collection point about the research questions.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter addressed the problem of the study and the method by which it pursued answers to the research questions. In other words, the problem of this study focused on identifying another way to promote cultural diversity as required by SLOs in a HGD course. The teacher-researcher is required each semester to measure students on the proficiency of understanding commonalities and differences from a global perspective of diverse cultures (Appendix B). The purpose of this study was to explore, develop, and describe the integration of a cultural fairytale as another way to promote cultural diversity. This chapter explained the essentials of how action research answered the overall question of how integrating a cultural fairy tale promoted concepts of cultural diversity. Five constructs from Vygotskian sociocultural
theory were used to support the method of this study. Through tool, sign, mediation, ZPD, and scaffolding the research questions answered the problem and purpose of this study. The fairy tale in tool, sign, and mediation presented a culture of exploration in an activity that participants experienced in the classroom. The cultural fairy tale supported the concepts of early childhood cognition describing language development through a cultural artifact. Finally, the use of a fairy tale developed an understanding of how ZPD and scaffolding can be implemented to gain an understanding of diverse cultures from a global perspective.

In conclusion, Chapter 3 presented a description of procedures including, protocols and instrumentation, data sources, collection procedures, and components determining the trustworthiness of this action research study. A description of the research design, site selection, and population defined the social context of this study. Participant selection and ethical issues were defined for IRB permission of this study. This chapter concluded with data sources, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and the teacher-researcher’s positionality as it related to the trustworthiness of conducting an action research study. Chapter 4 will discuss the results of this study.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

The purpose of this action research study was to integrate a cultural fairy tale into a human growth and development class (HGD) as one way to promote concepts of cultural diversity. This study used the method of action research within the framework of Vygotskian sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978). The central question in this study was: How will integrating a cultural fairy tale in a college level HGD class promote concepts of cultural diversity? The research questions in this study are as follows:

**RQ1:** How can sign, tool, and mediation be used as a medium to communicate a cultural fairy tale to enhance cultural diversity in an HGD class?

**RQ2:** How does the use of a cultural fairy tale in an HGD class explain the cognitive process in early childhood development?

**RQ3:** How is a cultural fairy tale used to scaffold concepts of cultural diversity in an HGD class?

In order to answer the research questions, four qualitative data sources were used: fairy tale, Presentation/Activity 1, Presentation/Activity 2, and field notes in the form of reflective journaling. The reflective journaling was analyzed in conjunction with written documentation from the presentations/activities of participants to ensure trustworthiness. In this study, the coding of themes and categories systematically supported data analysis of all written documentation. The themes and categories were dependent on responses from the presentations/activities and the literary text of the fairy tale chosen for this study. For the analysis of data sources in this study, interpretation of journaling reflection from this teacher-researcher was coded to establish:

1. Participants’ knowledge of culture and cultural diversity.
2. Participants’ knowledge of early childhood cognitive development.

3. Participants’ knowledge of cultural fairy tales.

The written data supported features of the participants’ activity outcomes analyzed to establish:

1. Code for specific tools, signs, and mediation of a cultural fairy tale from oral tradition and interpretation.


3. Code for the origin of culture through familiarization of fairy tales and cultural knowledge for differences and commonalities.

This chapter begins with a description of the participants from a purposive homogenous sample at the college where the study took place and is followed by a detailed description of the analysis organized by the research questions. The discrepant data, the trustworthiness of data, and an action plan for future action research using literature in HGD classes are also discussed. The chapter closes with an analysis and summary of the results for this study.

**Description of Participants**

There were 29 students in the classroom. Twenty-five students were 18 years of age and over and volunteered for this study. Four students were under the age of 18. Even though they participated in the in-class presentations/activities, their data were not included in the analyses. There were 18 female students and seven male students. Refer to Table 2 for participant description and representativeness to the population.
**Demographics of Study Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Sample Number</th>
<th>Sample Percent</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 and Over</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (18 and Over)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male/Female (under 18)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 29 study participants. Data collection for students over 18 used in this study.*

The following section will present the findings of this action research study. The presentation and analysis of findings were organized by the research questions for this study. Each research question was organized based on the cyclical process of action research. This process involves planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Data sources were also organized around the cyclical process of action research.

**Presentation and Analysis of Findings**

**RQ1**: How can sign, tool, and mediation be used to communicate a cultural fairy tale to enhance cultural diversity in an HGD class?

**Planning.** This study used a fairy tale from the book *Cinderella: 4 Beloved Tales* (Meister, 2015) and approved for the Notable Trade Book list in 2016. This book retold the classic French version of Cinderella and the translated version to English along with three other modifications of the fairy tale: Rhodopis from Egypt, Yeh-Shen from China, and Little Burnt Face from the Micmac tribe of Canadian Maritimes (Meister, 2015). Cinderella and its multitude of cultural variations fall under the Aarne-Thompson-Uther Classification System (Multilingual Folk Tale Database, n.d.) “Listing of Magic” (300-749) and the subclass “Supernatural Helpers” (500-559), and type name “The Persecuted Heroine” (510A) as Cinderella; or, The Little Glass
Slipper. The planning required an examination of cultural commonalities and differences in signs (symbols), tools (objects), and mediation with the chosen fairy tale for this study, “Little Burnt Face.” The morphology of “Little Burnt Face” was themed according to Propp’s 31 functions of folktales (Propp, 2015). See Table 3.

Table 3

Comparison of Cross-cultural Themes in Cinderella and Little Burnt Face

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Cinderella</th>
<th>Little Burnt Face</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deceased mother</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing/absent father</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill-treatment by family members</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatural helpers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying tool (object)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission of a secret</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealt with adversary</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. This table is only a comparison of the translated English from the French version of Cinderella and the Micmac Indian version of Little Burnt Face.

Meister’s (2015) book provided an identification into the diversity of fairy tales across cultures. Because Cinderella was identified as a fairy tale (510a, ATU), it provided a cultural template to communicate commonalities and differences while still bound to the same plot. The storyline was consistent with the French version of Cinderella and followed the structure of a fairy tale according to Propp’s (2015) functions. The illustrations in “Little Burnt Face” presented a better understanding of the Micmac culture as a Canadian indigenous tribe (Eastern woodland tribe). Meister’s (2015) 4 Beloved Tales: Cinderella presented the cultures as reflected in the language (sign) and objects (tools) of the story.

**Acting and observing.** The following cultural themes of the literary fairy tale origin and culture of origin developed from Presentation/Activity 1 and in alignment with sign (language) and mediation. The first presentation/activity asked participants to identify a fairy tale they were
most familiar with and the culture of literary origin. The fairy tale identified by participants the most was Cinderella. Only one participant identified the correct culture of origin of this fairy tale. The second fairy tale identified was Peter Pan. Of the four participants who identified this fairy tale, only two identified the correct culture of origin. One participant identified Beauty and the Beast and correctly identified the culture of origin. Two participants identified Snow White, and only one participant identified the correct culture of origin for this fairy tale. Two participants identified Little Red Riding Hood and did not identify the correct cultural origin.

The remaining fairy tales identified were Sleeping Beauty, Rumpelstiltskin, and Hansel and Gretel. Participants did not identify the culture of origin for these tales. See Table 4.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification of Cultural Origin and Student Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation/Activity 1:</strong> Identification of fairy tale origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinderella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Pan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty and the Beast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Red Riding Hood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumpelstiltskin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping Beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hansel and Gretel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* This table represents the cultural origin of the fairy tale based on the literary text. Oral tradition traces these fairy tales to other cultures of origin.

The following cultural themes of campfire, rainbow, and wigwam emerged from presentation two and in alignment with tool, sign, and mediation. Participants were read (mediation) a fairy tale from the culture they chose at the end of the first presentation. The
participants voted on a Western European fairy tale. Based on methodological requirements, a Native American tale was selected. The themes emerged from the first responses to the fairy tale “Little Burnt Face.” The themes were aligned with the construct tool (object) they were instructed to draw at the end of the oral presentation of the fairy tale. Three cultural themes emerged in the drawing of the object. The first theme was a campfire. Participants who drew this cultural object displayed the same items in the object: fire, wood, and coals. All were consistently the same campfire pictorial in the drawing. Participants were not seated next to each other. Nine participants drew this campfire object. The second cultural theme was the rainbow. All were consistently the same object drawn. These participants were not seated next to each other during data collection. Color pattern varied with each participant. Eight participants drew the rainbow object. The last cultural theme drawn was the wigwam. The cultural theme varied in each drawing. Four participants drew this cultural theme from the fairy tale. Three participants drew cultural themes that were not representative of the fairy tale. One participant drew the object of the face of Little Burnt Face and two participants drew trees.

Three cultural themes emerged from the sign (language) participants were instructed to write at the end of the drawn tool (object). The first cultural theme centered on the object fire. The sign given to the object varied to represent the drawn object of the fairy tale. The signs given included, ignite, flame, burnt, molten, dark, toasted, and fire. The second cultural theme centered on Rainbow. The sign (language) given to the object varied with the drawn object rainbow. The signs given included, rainbow, happy, color ray, whip, leprechaun, color stream, and flanenheim. The teacher-researcher could not find a translation for this sign Flanenheim. The cultural theme to emerge was wigwam. The signs given included, teepee, stick house, and house. Four participants wrote signs (language) that were arbitrary, but still reflected the object drawn from
the fairy tale. These signs included: girl, bark, tree, and scene. The analysis of sign and tool and mediation responses led to discourse for analysis of question two in the study. Refer to Figure 1 for a visual representation of the tools (fire, rainbow, wigwam) and signs identified by the participants.

![Diagram of signs and tools](image)

**Figure 1.** Flow of participant responses for RQ1 using tool and sign.

**Signs.** Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of sign, tool, and mediation provided communication between the fairy tale used and responses from participants to enhance cultural diversity.

Participants were familiar with fairy tales based on the correct identification of a fairy tale during presentation/activity one. Eighty-four percent of participants correctly identified a fairy tale based on responses listed on the index cards. The communication of the fairy tale was based on oral traditions of storytellers and, therefore, the mediation of choice for this study (Zipes, 2012). Based on the familiarity with drawing and writing, participants communicated their translation of “Little Burnt Face” through directed activities. Several cultural themes developed during the first
exercise of Presentation/Activity 2. For example, participants who drew fire and wrote the word fire using different signs all had the same components of a campfire. These components consisted of coals, logs, and flames. Other themes communicated were direct objects from the fairy tale including rainbow and different forms of the wigwam. The two objects represented different cultural themes dependent on the specific culture. For example, one participant mediated the sentence of a leprechaun holding a pot of gold for his object of the rainbow. This specific cultural theme is representative of Irish/Scot culture and popularized in American pop culture (Radford, 2017). Another participant defined the sign for wigwam by using the word “teepee.”

The cultural themes identified in this activity provided a springboard to communicate other symbols that represent Native Americans. For example, participants quickly compared “Little Burnt Face” to Cinderella. When asked, “What is the cultural difference” by the teacher-researcher, most participants replied, “her moccasins.” This response led to a discussion on how fairy tales can become cross-cultural by changing out objects. The teacher-researcher furthered the discussion by asking what other types of shoes could replace glass slippers and moccasins. One participant replied, “flip-flops.” The narrative and discussion based on one tool (shoes) provided a cultural viewpoint from the dynamics of participants and the teacher-researcher.

Communicating a fairy tale through the constructs of sign, tool, and mediation fit the varied symbolic function of stories (Bronner, 2017; Propp, 2015; Zipes, 2012). Further, keeping with the tradition of oral presentations encouraged the participants to use their interpretation of the fairy tale (Zipes, 2012). The meaning of “Little Burnt Face” produced different symbolic representations of the fairy tale by promoting a Native American tale that was not familiar to the participants. Based on the diverse cultural themes of fire, rainbow, and wigwam the teacher-
researcher was able to make connections between Native American cultures. The limited information provided in the assigned textbook supported the use of this fairy tale to expound on the culture of Native American peoples. The analysis of “Little Burnt Face,” based on the Northwestern tribe MicMac demonstrated commonalities and differences for global perspectives and in alignment with the targeted SLO.

**Reflection.** The primary reflection after presentations one and two focused on the pedagogical approach to conducting the activities and introduction to culture. Students reflected knowledge of sociocultural theory by definition in the assigned textbook. The teacher-researcher noted varying knowledge of Vygotsky’s social constructivist theory and the impact of cultural influences on early childhood cognition. Based on discourse after presentation one, the teacher-researcher should approach culture from the beginning of the course and develop activities allowing students to express lived experiences of their own culture. Journal reflections after presentation/activity two indicated using oral traditions of fairy tales replicated the process of pre-reading levels in early childhood. Feedback from participants to the teacher-researcher provided ideas about how to solidify the activity to increase awareness of diversity within the fairy tale genre. The activities established further insight into curriculum instruction that aligned with targeted learning outcome.

Reflective journal notes of the teacher-researcher provided deliberate action in and action after during presentation one and two implicating the constructs of tool, sign, and mediation. The teacher-researcher thought as she walked into the teacher collaborator’s room, “I walked into a classroom with students that I didn’t know!” Further thinking, “I had no idea what the teacher collaborator had discussed on the topics of ZPD and scaffolding, much less on Vygotsky himself.” Simply put, the teacher-researcher did not know the participant's knowledge.
activity two, the teacher-researcher noticed different expressions as crayon boxes were handed to participants. At each table, participants shared the box of crayons. This activity increased the conversation among participants. Some participants immediately took out the crayons and started arranging by colors. Other participants were lining the crayons in rows between each person. The teacher-researcher made several remarks based on the observation. This observation granted an opportunity to discuss the crayons as “tools” and what Vygotsky meant by tools in his theory. The teacher-researcher furthered the discussion by stating, “I often give examples of naming an object based on the language I speak and ask my own students to give examples.” The teacher-researcher discussed the value of language in cultural development using Vygotsky’s social constructivist model. The teacher-researcher explained, “The fairy tale will be read orally, and you guys can make a decision if you want the fairy tale read again. . . . This reflection granted an opportunity to establish the best language and choice of words to identify the culture for the activity. This reflection was a reference to understanding participants’ identifying culture based on country or region. The teacher-researcher thought, “do they come into this course thinking country is a culture?” The teacher-researcher later reflected, “In my classroom, I might teach that culture is different in the country due to diversity.”

RQ2: How does the use of a cultural fairy tale in an HGD class explain the cognitive process in early childhood development?

Planning. The process in which the fairy tale was discussed during presentation/activity one provided a pedagogical platform for planning instruction on early childhood cognition. The targeted areas of this planning focused on theory of mind, autobiographical memory, and cultural literacy. The fairy tale was used as a cultural tool to explain Vygotsky’s theory (1978) on private speech and the role cultural experiences influence cognition (Vygotsky, 1978). The planning
process consisted of the teacher-researcher practicing ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) concepts to communicate during and after the activity.

**Acting and observing.** Based on responses in the classroom discussion on early childhood theories, categories of different types of stories developed. This discussion took place during presentation/activity one and after participants were asked to write down the fairy tale and culture of origin. This activity included the overall umbrella of folktales and the sub-categories of folklore, myth, legend, fable, and fairy tale. The participants verbally discussed what stories they grew up with and others referred to stories based on the influence of television and Disney. The category participants stated the most was the genre of fantasy and the tale type was fairy tale. The teacher-researcher listed the different types of folktales on the board and allowed participants to identify favorite stories. This process aligned with early childhood development and the interest of fantasy by children at this specific age (Bettelheim, 2010; Favat, 1977; Zipes, 2012). The mediations used in this study were verbal presentations discussing early childhood development using Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) and the method of scaffolding to present the fairy tale through oral reading.

During presentation/activity two, participants were asked to write a sentence based on the object (tool) and sign (language) during classroom time. Verbatim quotes reflected cultural themes written by participants about the fairy tale “Little Burnt Face” (Meister, 2015). The first cultural theme of fire was mediated through responses of participants’ sentences about the object and sign. Eight participants reflected the main theme in this fairy tale with the description of fire. One participant stated, “I drew fire and coal.” This description aligns with the fire and coal stated in the fairy tale and early childhood concepts of “I” in the development of the self as discussed in the assigned textbook.
The assigned chapter in this study described Vygotsky’s concept of “social interaction model” based on sociocultural theory (Papalia & Martorell, 2015), aligning with the development of autobiographical memory. Three participants described “fire” through a narrative description. For example, one participant narrated fire by stating, “The fire is bright” and another participant stated, “The fire is getting big.” Two participants narrated a caution about fire. One participant stated, “don’t get too close to the burnt.” This participant was consistent with the title of the fairy tale. The other participant warned, “The flames are hot, be careful.” The last two narratives of autobiographic structure in statements reflected personal narrative. One participant conferred, “Ignite the fire in your soul” as the other related, “When Abby picked up dark [sic] it burned her hand.”

The second cultural theme mediated through participants’ responses to object and sign was “rainbow.” Nine participants reflected this cultural theme from the fairy tale. For example, two participants stated the colors of the rainbow and where the rainbow was located. These statements included, “The rainbow is in the sky” and “The rainbow has many colors.” One participant narrated how the rainbow became visual by stating, “The light hit the rain, and a color stream appeared.” Another participant added emotion to the rainbow in the response stating, “The happy is in the sky.” Two participants’ narrated responses: “The girl loves to see the color ray in the morning” and “The child saw the whip and ran toward it.” The word “whip” is the only response in this cultural theme related to the fairy tale. One participant referenced the rainbow from Irish culture. This participant’s sentence stated, “At the end of the rainbow you see a leprechaun holding a pot of gold.”

The third and most related to cultural artifacts from the fairy tale was “wigwam.” Three participants reflected through the mediation of object and sign to this cultural theme. It was noted
that the participants did not reference the actual name of the cultural artifact in the responses. One participant referred this artifact as a teepee. The response stated, “I walked into my teepee,” a low elaborative response. The other two responses were directed to self and narrated the use of “I” and “my” in the responses. Thus, reflecting no connection to the fairy tale. The use of the word “house” (sign) also relates to Western cultural themes. Two narrative responses were indirect mediations of “Little Burnt Face” in describing a “girl with crazy hair and scars” and “my dog barks too . . . but this made her dress.” This response reflected the cultural narrative in the fairy tale relating to the main dramatis personae being a girl and making her dress from bark. Refer to Figure 2 for a visual summary of these findings.

**Figure 2.** Flow of participant responses for RQ2 using cognitive processes in early childhood.

Participants demonstrated knowledge of Vygotsky’s (1978) concepts of ZPD and scaffolding based on assigned readings in the textbook. Participants demonstrated the ability to define the concepts in reference to a study guide for the targeted learning outcome measurement. The teacher-researcher applied Vygotsky’s (1978) ZPD and scaffolding centered on culture and
language skills. Participants engaged with the teacher-researcher regarding the scaffolding or space in-between during presentation/activity one. Participants gained an understanding of how children can use stories to identify theory of mind and autobiographical memory. Reading stories to children can also increase literacy skills in language (Bettelheim, 2010; Charles, 2009; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978; Zipes, 2012).

**Reflections.** Journal reflections for RQ2 focused on theory to practice in early childhood. Reflections noted to develop/expand how culture and cultural artifacts, for example, stories, influence these cognitive concepts. The teacher-researcher reflected on using more information from the textbook to expand personal experiences. Further, to promote activities for students to practice their ZPD based on language, autobiographical memory, and theory of mind. Reflective journaling for this research question directly related to developing instruction that correlates different types of stories beyond the use of fairy tales, for example, biographical literature. Reflection notes from the teacher-researcher’s journal consisted of statements directed to concepts of early childhood cognition. One reflection stated, “But what do they know, there is a question on the SLOs directly related to ZPD and the theorist who coined the term.” The authors did a great job in this chapter in reference to definitions. Participants reworded what they had read and learned from the textbook. They could not go above the definition and present different examples. The teacher-researcher noticed they could not get past the EOC study guide—varying limited knowledge stated on the SLOs criteria for mastery to limited knowledge.

The teacher-researcher practiced scaffolding in reflection journal on autobiographical memory, language, and theory of mind. This practicing and referencing pedagogical instruction improved the activity in class. “Just to practice the art of scaffolding, and to feel comfortable doing the process” was a journal reflection. Practicing in the journal by writing down important
notes is good preparation for any comment or response from the participants. This activity was also practiced in the teacher-researcher’s classroom, minus students. The teacher-researcher thought, “Planning takes practice!” Reflections looked back on a review of Vygotsky’s ZPD and scaffolding about the cognitive development of language, memory, and theory of mind—real and ideal self. Reflecting on different types of stories and reflection of story type, by listing each concept on the board—supported with examples. The teacher-researcher drew another small circle. Teacher-researcher discussed what the child knows based on social-cultural context. This example provided scaffolding to different cultures, different types of stories, and different types of artifacts.

RQ3: How is a cultural fairy tale used to scaffold concepts of cultural diversity in an HGD class?

Planning. A concept influenced by Vygotsky’s (1962) social-cultural theory but not directly coined by him was scaffolding. Scaffolding is described by Vygotsky as the space between what the child knows and what he can learn through adult guidance and is defined as the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). This process was used to plan presentation two for the activity and discussion after the object, sign, and mediation exercise. Planning was also influenced by participants’ identification of the fairy tale Cinderella. This fairy tale was identified during the first presentation when asked, “What fairy tale are you most familiar with?” Forty-six percent of the participants wrote Cinderella on the index card. Planning focused on the fairy tale as a mediation to discuss commonalities and differences among diverse cultures. The planning included the concepts of cultural diversity including cultural surroundings, cultural codes, symbolic messages, and mythical language (Bosma, 1992; Charles, 2009; Propp, 2015; Zipes, 2012).
**Acting and observing.** The analysis of this research question focused on the use of the fairy tale to scaffold concepts of cultural diversity. Students were first asked to identify social-cultural surroundings in comparison with “Little Burnt Face” and the fairy tale they verbally compared to this tale, Cinderella. The participants were asked to identify commonalities between the two fairy tales as one originated in the literary form in France and the tale for this study was Native American. Participants identified the family as a commonality. One participant replied, “The difference is one tale has stepsisters, and the other are her real sisters.” Another participant stepped in to say shoes were a common theme. The discussion turned to the differences between Cinderella’s shoes and the shoes of “Little Burnt Face.” Differences in culture related to basic items as shoes and homes were discussed as the teacher-researcher wrote these commonalities and differences on the board.

The next concept to emerge focused on cultural codes of the fairy tale “Little Burnt Face.” These cultural codes granted a scaffold to discuss cultural artifacts that may represent an identification of specific cultures. Participants replied with cultural codes of status, wealth, dress, and family. The next scaffold was mythical language. Fairy tales use mythical language that may represent a certain culture. Mythical language provides a way to scaffold how language transcends cultures throughout the ages and also ties into Vygotsky’s (1928, 1978) theory of cultural development and the use of cultural language dependent on social experience. Mythical language in “Little Burnt Face” established the categories of rainbow and milky-way. These categories led to a discussion on differences and commonalities of the cultural language used for the same object. The last scaffold for this research question emerged as the theme of symbolic messages. Fairy tales present symbolic messages in the form of moral reasoning. This section of
the analysis demonstrated connections between the narrative and discussion that took place during the two presentations/activities.

The open-ended discussion during presentation one centered on the establishment of Vygotsky’s (1978) ZPD through the concept of scaffolding. This discussion also established the introduction of the research question using the fairy tale as a way to promote culture. The teacher-researcher’s narrative elicited discussion to participants on early childhood cognition and review of Vygotsky’s (1978) ZPD. The teacher-researcher drew a circle on the board and asked for discussion from students reflecting what the child has developed thus far in the human lifespan. This narrative was explicitly directed at early childhood cognition.

The specific narrative stated by the teacher-researcher asked, “What do children in the early childhood stage know about themselves?” Through Vygotsky’s (1978) construct of mediation, the teacher-researcher led a discussion to the development of the self in early childhood cognition. Participants responded with a discussion on self-awareness. The teacher-researcher elicited responses on what self-awareness meant. Self-awareness is the understanding of having an identity that is separate and distinct from others (Papalia & Martorell, 2015). Participant responses varied from looking in a mirror and knowing it is you, to being heard when yelling, and throwing temper tantrums. The next narrative from the teacher-researcher led a discussion on culturally based responses within early childhood cognition. The teacher-researcher asked, “Is self-awareness cross-cultural, meaning everyone develops self-awareness around the same time?” Responses varied from “I don’t know” to “I would think.” The teacher-researcher narrated back to biological development about understanding humans in culture. This focus led to the discussion on cultural self-awareness. The teacher-researcher proposed the narrative, “Are we taught cultural self-awareness?” Participants discussed possible explanations
to cultural self-awareness and concluded, “It depended on who is teaching you.” The teacher-researcher labeled in the center circle of the ZPD (Vygotsky, 197), “real and ideal self.” Cultural self-awareness led to the next scaffolding narrative on theory of mind. The responses were a direct discussion of the information the participants learned through the assigned textbook chapter for this study. References to this definition related to the cognitive theory of Jean Piaget (2007). The teacher-researcher increased the narrative to state, “Is theory of mind cultural?” Based on the concepts of theory of mind listed in the chapter, participants discussed how they believed culture was the number one influence on theory of mind. The teacher-researcher listed theory of mind under real and ideal self. The third and final question of the inner circle ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) narrated, “Do children know stories exist? All participants led the narrative about stories read to them and favorite books. The teacher-researcher expanded the question to add culture. The question stated, “Is it your culture that determines the types of story?” All participants led a discussion among themselves and with the teacher-researcher. This discussion was added under theory of mind in the inner ZPD circle as cultural stories.

When the second activity was completed, and all index cards were collected by the teacher-researcher, a question was directed to the participants “What fairy tale have you heard that was similar to Little Burnt Face?” A majority of participants verbally stated, “Cinderella.” This response led to a discussion on social-cultural surroundings and a comparison to the English translation from French of Cinderella with which the class was familiar. When asked about the source of cultural familiarity with this version, most participants referred to Disney as the source of knowledge of this tale. Social-cultural surroundings between Cinderella and “Little Burnt Face” produced several common themes. Participants listed family dynamics, sisters, are present in both tales, shoes (Cinderella has glass slippers, and Little Burnt Face has moccasins), village,
Cinderella living outside of the palace center, and Little Burnt Face living in wigwam villages. Social-cultural surroundings between tales produced several differences in themes. Participants listed time, Cinderella takes place during a time of kings and queens and Little Burnt Face when Native Americans lived all over North America. Modern living, Cinderella lives in a house, and Little Burnt Face lives in a wigwam. Participants were asked to identify the social-cultural codes of the two fairy tales. Participants listed status, wealth, dress, and family. When asked to list mythical language, participants listed: “once upon a time,” fairy godmother, magic, milky way, and rainbow. Lastly, participants were asked to identify symbolic messages and participants listed: kindness, morals, nature, and hope. The teacher-researcher presented this dialogue in a logical manner. Participants offered and heard responses about the culture of the fairy tale presented as well as the fairy tale most identified, which was Cinderella. Refer to Figure 3 for a visual representation of these findings.

**Figure 3.** Flow of participant responses for RQ3 using scaffolding and ZPD.
Reflections. Based on the results of Activity 2, the teacher-researcher reflected on the use of a fairy tale as another way to promote cultural diversity. Narrative both during and after both presentations granted insight into the overall concepts of culture and more importantly, what students bring to the classroom as reflective of their own culture. Reflective journaling provided a self-narrative into the personal experience of the teacher-researcher and the use of fairy tales compared to other types of folklore. Journal notes reflected the possibilities of broadening the use of fairy tales to include all stages of human lifespan or a continuation of the original exercise as the course progresses to other developmental stages. The most personal reflection of this research was an opportunity for this teacher-researcher to share deep compassion for fairy tales.

The teacher-researcher noted limited knowledge of cultural relatedness to ZPD and scaffolding. Participants really could not go beyond definitions in the textbook on sociocultural theory. Participants lacked a grasp of the concept. They could not go past the simple definition in the textbook when discussing culture. The teacher-researcher stated, “Okay, that’s a great definition, but what does it mean? In your own words?” So that is where the teacher-researcher said, “Don’t you think culture has a lot to do with it, meaning what a child is told-like stories?” The teacher-researcher continued by asking, “They know stories exit, but what types, after all, someone had to tell them there are different types of stories.” The teacher-researcher noted during the discourse that participants categorized fairy tales together by country, not culture. The teacher-researcher reflected in her journal “how do you identify promoting a culture with the assigned textbook? “Well, I guess by assigning the reading?” The activity would be to read, but only promoting based on what the textbook has identified as a culture. The teacher thought, “In a way, just promoting the assigned textbook as the cultural source of knowledge; they are limited to mastery of diverse culture is bound within the source.”
This reflection was practice in preparation for RQ3. The teacher-researcher told students during the presentation “Stories were first told orally and still remain to oral tradition today.” This statement furthered the information from the required reading in the textbook on pre-reading levels in children. This discussion expanded the information on Vygotsky’s theory of drawings. After the discussion on theory of mind, the teacher-researcher asked, “Are you ready for the fairy tale?” The teacher-researcher discussed the NCSS and location of the fairy tale. The teacher-researcher continued by stating, “Children in different social contexts have stories orally told, and it is cross-cultural!” Reflection action after this study was eye-opening for the teacher-researcher as a professional. The teacher-researcher always maintains a level of cultural literacy and most of all, is culturally aware. The following reflection was from the teacher-researcher’s journals. “Students needed clarification on a fairy tale. Some students gave verbal examples during the presentations.” The teacher-researcher felt confident as personal experience falls within the genre of all folklore sub-genres, including fairy tales. Another reflection stated, “I stayed confident after practicing the activity in my classroom, no students present.”

The analysis of all three research questions led to the presentation of findings for the following overarching research question: How will integrating a cultural fairy tale in a college HGD class promote concepts of cultural diversity? Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of mind using the constructs of tool, sign, and mediation provided a way to communicate a fairy tale and promoted Native American culture. Themes emerged relating commonalities and differences of Native Americans represented in this tale and participants in the study. Campfire and rainbow were common themes found in many global cultures. Participants were able to reconstruct their perspective and relate these themes to their own culture. Participants were not as familiar with the word wigwam or what tribes or nations used this type of home. Based on responses from
activity two, participants interpreted and named the object either teepee or house. Through open narrative and discussion, the teacher-researcher was able to make connections between the fairy tale on Native Americans and information they had read in the assigned textbook.

The findings of RQ1 and RQ2 provided the space in between (Vygotsky, 1978) to scaffold cultural codes and surroundings, symbolic messages, and language of the fairy tale. The findings reinforced that participants were familiar with popular fairy tales such as Cinderella but uncertain where these tales originated or what culture they represented. Presenting a fairy tale, they were not familiar with opened the narrative and discussion about Native American culture. Identifying familiar symbols or signs such as fire and rainbow permitted a cultural comparison of what they knew the symbol to represent based on familiar culture and to learn what signs meant in another. The overall reflection of both presentation activities and the integration of the fairy tale supported the use of a fairy tale to identify another way to promote culture as well as teaching the subject of human growth and development.

**Discrepant Data**

The findings in this study showed limited inconsistent or discrepant data for the instruction on drawing an object. The teacher-researcher instructed participants to draw one object from the fairy tale. Repeated instructions stated “Draw one object from the fairy tale, any object that stuck out in the fairy tale” to clarify the activity. The results revealed four participants drew more than one object on the index card (See Table 5*). The only unexpected data for “sign” showed one participant making up a name to define the object. The specific sentence used to mediate this word stated, “Look at the flanenheim after the rainbow” (see Table 5*). Table 5 displays the tool (object), sign (word), and mediation (sentence) described by participants after hearing the oral presentation of the fairy tale, “Little Burnt Face.”
Table 5

*Presentation/Activity 2 Cards by Theme: Tool*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Sign</th>
<th>Mediation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campfire</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>I drew fire and coal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campfire</td>
<td>Burnt</td>
<td>Don’t get too close to the burnt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campfire</td>
<td>Flame</td>
<td>The flame is bright.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campfire</td>
<td>Ignite</td>
<td>Ignite the fire in your soul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campfire</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>The fire is getting big.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campfire</td>
<td>Molten</td>
<td>The coals are like molten lava.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campfire</td>
<td>Flames</td>
<td>The flames are hot; be careful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teepee</td>
<td>Teepee</td>
<td>I walked into my teepee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigwam, girl, campfire*</td>
<td>Toasted</td>
<td>The marshmellow was toasted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A face-chin, lips, and nose*</td>
<td>Stick house</td>
<td>“Mommy, can I make a stick house in the backyard?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>My house is bigger than your house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>The happy in the sky is pretty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow</td>
<td>Luck</td>
<td>I wish you luck on the test!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow</td>
<td>Luck</td>
<td>The child saw the whip and ran toward it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow</td>
<td>Whip</td>
<td>The light hit the rain, and a color stream appeared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow</td>
<td>Flanenhein **</td>
<td>Look at the flanenheim after the rain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow</td>
<td>Rainbow</td>
<td>The rainbow is in the sky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow</td>
<td>Rainbow</td>
<td>The rainbow has many colors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow</td>
<td>Leprechauns</td>
<td>At the end of the rainbow, you see a leprechaun holding a pot of gold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree</td>
<td>Tree</td>
<td>I drew a tree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree and rainbow*</td>
<td>Bark</td>
<td>My dogs bark to [sic], but this made her dress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure of a girl</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>The girl has crazy hair and scars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stream and trees*</td>
<td>Scene</td>
<td>The scene of little burnt face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow</td>
<td>Color ray</td>
<td>The girl loved to see the color of a ray in the morning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal</td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>Don’t get too close to the burnt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *denotes the discrepant data.

**Analysis of Results**

The findings based on narrative, discussion, and reflection of the teacher-researcher indicated the concern might be a knowledgeable understanding of culture. If students taking this course do not come in with a basic understanding of culture, how will they learn diversity? When
participants were asked to identify a fairy tale, a majority of participants identified a classical fairy tale; but when asked to identify the culture of origin, a majority identified a country. This result implored to know whether students in a college classroom have a correct understanding of what culture is. It is understandable that most individuals think of fairy tale by culture. Any tale from the Grimms reflects Germany (Bronner, 2017; Dundes, 1999). When 42% of the students put down Cinderella, and when asked of cultural origin, 77% put a specific country, there is a concern. Only two participants put down the region of Western Europe as their response.

The teacher-researcher asked at the end of the first presentation, “If you could hear a fairy tale from one of the four cultures stated in the chapter, which one would you like to hear?” The teacher-researcher stated by culture, for example, Asian, Native American, Anglo-Saxon, and Scandinavian. The teacher-researcher did not ask by the actual country stated in the assigned chapter—would this have made a difference in the choice of the fairy tale? This question raises another question. Before students are measured on the required student learning outcome measure, should explanations of cultural commonalities and differences be incorporated in alignment to cultural groups stated in the textbook? The textbook may be misleading regarding providing a global perspective in the understanding of human growth and development.

The analysis of results in this section identifies through conceptualization emergent patterns that reflect against the literature review and Vygotskian sociocultural theory (Cole & Wertsch, 1996; Liu & Matthews, 2005; Kalpana, 2014; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). One section of chapter one described the textbook assigned to the HGD class. This textbook was provided as one way to meet the requirement for the targeted student learning outcome. The contradiction and confirmation align with the culture chosen for this study, Native or American Indians. The
student-learning outcome addressed the word “promote” and required “an understanding of the differences and commonalities of diverse cultures from a global perspective” (Appendix B).

The results of this analysis showed a majority of differences describing Native Americans. For example, a majority of comparative differences were related to white European Americans. Examples included a comparison of miscarriages and mortality, higher rates of alcoholism and suicide, and the high rate of poor health. The literature did not discuss cultural differences or specific tribes or nations having differential rates. The only commonality was a comparison to Whites in suicide in the late adult stage of development. This confirms Tyler’s (2013) comments about pre-prepared educational packages of textbooks and the standpoint for textbook authors. This analysis of results identified a pattern of presenting Native Americans through a mega-culture inclusive to all peoples of this ethnic background and not ethnic minority groups of tribes or nations within the United States. The literary information about Native or American Indians was presented through all stages of the lifespan in this textbook (Papalia & Martorell, 2015).

A pattern emerged in the framework of Vygotskian sociocultural theory (Cole & Wertsch, 1996; Liu & Matthews, 2005; Kalpana, 2014; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). Vygotsky’s (1978) theory played a role in the social-cultural development of the child and may disregard factors of individual development. Vygotsky (1987) often compared his theory to Piaget’s (1970) theory. Vygotsky (1987) focused on the cultural development of the child and the social environment’s influence on tool, sign, and mediation. Piaget (1970) focused on the science of individual cognition and the individual mind. This research study focused on the group as a culture within the classroom, instead of taking consideration of individual experience when asked the questions about knowledge of fairy tales and culture. Participants were measured on
individual performance, not as a cultural group or whole. This focus may have an effect not considered when the presentations/activities occurred.

The final pattern identified was based on the culture of the United States instead of individual cultures within the classroom of participants. Vygotsky’s (1978) ZPD may not apply to all social environments within the classroom environment. The U.S. culture was portrayed as an individualistic culture when compared to human growth and development in the assigned textbook. The participants in this study may perceive the presentations/activities from this viewpoint and not the collective social, historical perspective of Vygotsky (1928). These patterns may reflect the misleading interpretation of the results based on tool, sign, and mediation reflected in the responses of the participants. This situation may be considered in an extension of scholarly work when deciding on specific theoretical frameworks and participants who lived and were educated in a multicultural society as the United States as compared to the genesis of theory studied.

**Trustworthiness of the Data**

Triangulation of data sources was used to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. The four data sources included: the fairy tale, presentations one and two, and reflective journaling. To ensure trustworthiness, peer debriefing was employed to gain insight on the presentations and activities with the teacher collaborator (Mills, 2003). The teacher-researcher reflected on all narratives and discussions that took place in the teacher collaborator’s classroom. The teacher collaborator knew the students and was able to give thoughtful feedback on discussions during data collection periods. This teacher-researcher also used referential adequacy to check the credibility of the fairy tale chosen for this study. The fairy tale was listed under the NCSS and
was the most current listed is 2016. Several copies of the fairy tale were compared to the published fairy tale listed under the NCSS (2016).

This study was conducted in the teacher collaborator’s classroom and not in the classroom of the teacher-researcher to ensure trustworthiness of transferability. This trustworthiness was demonstrated through the action research process that the presentations and activities data could be collected in a classroom context that is not the teacher-researcher’s classroom. To ensure trustworthiness of dependability, this study established an audit trail of all data collection material for this study. This study has written descriptions of all presentations and activities. This study triangulated four data sources including the reflexivity of the teacher-researcher to ensure trustworthiness of confirmability.

**Action plan.** The analysis of results in action research studies is represented through an action plan. This process attempts to answer what has been learned from the study and future action research projects (Mills, 2003). Based on the analysis of findings and themes that developed from this study, the teacher-researcher made the following action plan for future classes in human growth and development to meet targeted learning outcome measures on cultural diversity.

The action plan includes four main areas to consider. First, developing and restructuring activities in the classroom to focus not only on cultures discussed in the text but include those cultures left out of the literature. Second, developing and restructuring activities that identify ways to promote culture that align with approved curriculum guidelines. Third, expanding cultural activities to other human growth and development stages, for example, adolescence. Finally, developing and restructuring professional development activities to include the following:
1. Address learning styles of students taking HGD courses that can provide taking action in pedagogical practices in the classroom. For example, developing presentations and activities that incorporate all learning styles in alignment with student learning outcome measures.

2. Expand online resources for students taking HGD courses that align with pre-professional programs as a required course and students taking this course as an elective.

3. Develop professional development goals that align with the institutions’ strategic goals as required by accrediting state and regional institutions.

4. Continue the action research cycle using the teacher researcher’s classroom. This action plan proposes developing communication with students through different media including online blogs and social media outlets such as Facebook.

5. Addressing future cycles of action research from the pedagogical perspective as culturally responsive teaching in both curriculum and instruction.

6. Addressing best practices pedagogy for defining culture and establishing curriculum and instruction that incorporates culture as a strategic goal for all HGD classes taught by this teacher-researcher.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings, analysis, and results of this action research study. This study focused on identifying another way to promote cultural diversity as stated in the student learning outcome (SLO). The study used a homogeneous purposive sample size of 25 participants with an academic standing of either AA, AS or pre-professional program status at a college in Northwest, Florida. All participants were de-identified and data analyses through coding and categories of the presentations/activities. Open-ended narratives and discussions were
presented as part of the presentations/activities, and therefore, participants could respond at any time when data collection was taking place. Open-ended narrative and discussion prompted participants to relate knowledge of information discussed in the assigned textbook and Vygotskian social-cultural theory (Cole & Wertsch, 1996; Liu & Matthews, 2005; Kalpana, 2014; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992) that surrounded this study. Questions for the presentations/activities stemmed from each construct of Vygotskian sociocultural theory and early childhood development. The fairy tale chosen for this study was listed on the NCSS Notable Trade Books for Young Children under the title, *4 Beloved Tales: Cinderella: Stories Around the World* (Meister, 2015).

Research questions were presented and analyzed to reflect the five constructs used in this action research study. Open discussions and discourse influenced the cultural pedagogy of the teacher-researcher. The processes of the activity connected to the concepts presented in the assigned chapter on early childhood cognition.
Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Suggestions for Future Research

The final chapter captures the findings and perspective of this action research study. The first section focuses on an overall picture of the study including, the restated overview of the problem, purpose statement, research questions, and major findings from the analysis and results. The section that follows recapitulates the summary of findings within the framework of Vygotskian sociocultural theory using a cultural fairy tale. Based on critical reflection, a synthesis of findings through interpretation and implications discusses the validation of this study. The final section provides a rationale for future studies in the integration of fairy tales and other folktale types, including the teacher-researcher’s thoughtful suggestions for future professional development in HGD courses.

Summary and Major Findings

Since the change to the AA degree plan in 2015-2016, HGD courses assessed student learning outcomes (SLOs) each semester. The results from these assessments are calculated and sent to official accreditation organizations. These SLOs have not changed since its inception under the Behavioral Social Sciences. This study focused on the SLO measuring the identification of promoting another way to understanding commonalities and differences of diverse cultures. This change is advantageous not only to the college but also to professors teaching this course. Under the accreditation body of SACSCOC (2011) faculty continue to develop curriculum and instruction to ensure all students enrolled meet the qualifications to move forward in degree plans and successfully pursue post-secondary degrees.

The problem this study addressed was reflected in the targeted SLO and the specific wording of “ways” to promote cultural diversity. A human growth and development textbook is assigned each semester. This textbook provides only one way to promote cultural diversity based
on the cultures identified and discussed within the text. The teacher-researcher is responsible for identifying ways to promote culture through curriculum and instruction for this class. Adding a cultural fairy tale activity introduced another way to promote diversity in the HGD class to meet the SLO measurement.

The purpose of this action research study was to integrate a cultural fairy tale into a human growth and development class as another way to promote cultural diversity. The central research question of this study was: How will integrating a cultural fairy tale in a college level HGD class promote concepts of cultural diversity? The research questions in this study were as follows: RQ1: How can sign, tool, and mediation be used as a medium to communicate a cultural fairy tale to enhance cultural diversity in an HGD class? RQ2: How does the use of a cultural fairy tale in an HGD class explain the cognitive processes in early childhood development? RQ3: How is cultural fairy tale used to scaffold concepts of cultural diversity in an HGD class? These questions remained consistent throughout the entire study.

An overall conception of the literature for this study established a platform for the use of Vygotsky (1978, 1987) and his influence on the framework of sociocultural theory. Even though the other major contributor to the cognitive theory is Jean Piaget (1970), this study focused on culture. Culture was the central theme embodied throughout Vygotsky’s work. The significant works used in this study were Mind in Society (1978), Thought and Speech (1962), The Collected Works of L.S. Vygotsky, volume 1, Problems of General Psychology (1987), and The Psychology of Art (1971).

Vygotsky’s (1978) main concepts of tool and sign helped to create his major contributions to works on culture. Sign and tool are a direct link to cultural-historical contexts and cultural, historical artifacts. His theories on learning helped to solidify theories of learning.
Vygotsky (1978) believed learning was influenced by what the child’s exposure had gifted him or her. Learning launched from cultural influences and was known by its parallel to cultural exposure. This framework of cultural influence aligned with Lewin’s methodology of action research. Lewin’s method was much affected by personal, cultural experiences. His works reflected the influence of one group’s narrative over the cultural narrative of oppressed groups. By taking action, oppressed groups based on the culture alone had a platform to change (Lewin, 1946).

Lewin’s (1946) influence was centered on the social group. Culture was the force that influenced the developing person. He beckoned for the actions of the individual’s cultural background. As Vygotsky (1928) believed that culture influenced the development of the individual, Lewin believed in social groupings (Lewin, 1946, 1997/1935). The child is persuaded first by the family and then the collective. Therefore, the cultural group in which someone belongs has the most robust personal actions. The dominant culture has the overall cultural dependence on the individual. Even when sub-cultures were infiltrated, it was the re-education of the dominant culture that developed the individual’s beliefs (Lewin, 1997/1939, 1946).

This re-education led to Lewin (1946, 1997/1943) developing a method to take action and re-evaluate an objective measure of change. His method first developed for community and cultural groups led an influence to school settings in the mid-1980s (Stenhouse, 1988). This method known as action research became a choice for teachers who wanted to become researchers in their classrooms. By allowing teachers to become researchers, change in curriculum and instruction may provide opportunities in all levels of educational practices (Stenhouse, 1988). Current trends in culturally responsive teaching practice, whether by organizational policies or individual teacher, creates a cyclical process through action research.
One cycle rotates to the next. Reflections of pedagogical practice within the process of cultural responsiveness are ongoing just as every class brings in a new culture of students.

The overview of major findings from the literature review also centered on the integration of the cultural fairy tale in the HGD class where this study took place. In other words, the use of literature itself as a cultural tool, sign, and mediation artifact to teach cultural diversity provided another way to promote commonalities and differences from a global perspective.

Vygotskian sociocultural theory defined the boundaries of this framework and all the material that paints the picture (Cole & Wertsch, 1996; Liu & Matthews, 2005; Kalpana, 2014; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000; Shabani, 2016; van der Veer, 1996; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). Therefore, the cultural material of literature paints continued pictures of diverse cultures and provided a way to identify people and places for students to learn. The NCSS (2016) continues to provide this platform with yearly reviews of literature that can be aligned with the curriculum and instruction for teacher-researcher teaching K-20.

Culture continues to stand first in the established themes of this organization. The NCSS (2010) in partnership with the CBC (2017), meticulously evaluates literature submitted by publishing companies that would best exemplify the thematic strand of culture. The focus of this study chose the category of folktales as listed under the NCSS (2016) and in direct relation to early childhood development. Making the comparison to Vygotskian (1978) constructs of tool, sign, and mediation along with the processes of ZPD and scaffolding reinforced the use of fairy tales to represent cultural processes best. The category of folktales and the subcategory of fairy tales provided the best-case scenario for the cultural teaching of concepts in early childhood development. Fairy tales are usually short and, therefore, can be easily used within specific periods of the classroom.
Cultural ideas and beliefs may be transferred from one fairy tale to another. This transference provided an opportunity to re-create on continuous cyclical bases within the methodology of action research. Fairy tales are profound in oral traditions (Zipes, 2012). The storyteller and audience prescribed the technique and supported theories of pre-reading and storytelling with children. Every re-telling of the story provided possibilities dependent on the meaning at the time. Fairy tales are based in and on symbolic language. Language development was central in the formation of theory of mind and autobiographical memory (Vygotsky, 1978). Multiple meanings through the symbolic language of fairy tales permit individual meanings to students learning human growth and development. The fairy tale provides an avenue for discourse that can be used over and over within each new classroom. These stories are mediators between the symbolic tools used and the signs created by the culture using them (Zipes, 2012). The results of this study provided a platform for participants to engage not only from an academic perspective but allowed an individual personal mediation connecting objects (tools) and signs (language) from their own cultural lived experience.

The qualitative action research methodology reflected the participants’ concepts of culture and connections to early childhood cognition. The objective of this study was to explore, develop, and describe the integration of a cultural fairy tale as a way to promote commonalities and differences of diverse cultures in a global perspective. The teacher-researcher was provided with one way to do so via an assigned textbook. All assigned textbooks at this college require utilization in each class. It is, however, the level of content used from the textbook that is up to the instructor teaching the class. Tyler (2013) indicated textbooks often reflect the author’s authority of the subject and thereby, materials published are the author’s perspectives. This textbook presented several cultures within each of the developmental stages. The cultures were
defined by the grouping of individuals per country of origin; for example, Latin or Mexican American. Statistical information was reported, however, leaving out how the culture influenced the differences and commonalities to support the research findings.

The culture chosen by the participants for this study was Native American. A fairy tale approved by the NCSS (2016) was used to answer the main as well as sub-questions for this study. The Native American fairy tale was integrated through oral communication, written explanations, and instructional support. This fairy tale was specific to the tribe of the Micmac people found in the Canadian region of Nova Scotia. Themes emerged from the narrative discussion and written responses to questions related to the activities.

The first research question focused on using tool, sign, and mediation to communicate the cultural fairy tale “Little Burnt Face” to enhance cultural diversity. Findings indicated that participants were familiar with fairy tales based on the results of presentation/activity one. Having exposure to popular fairy tales and the one most identified as Cinderella granted participants a knowledge base of understanding the fairy tale presented in class. Participants were able to complete the activity of drawing an object from the fairy tale, giving a sign (language) to the object and completing a mediation of the activity through a descriptive sentence. Participants chose objects from the “Little Burnt Face” representing campfire, rainbow, and wigwam. Signs related to the objects drawn and sentences (mediation) provided a cultural interpretation from the viewpoint of the participants’ translation.

The second research question focused on increasing knowledge of early childhood cognition through concepts of language, autobiographical memory, and theory of mind using a cultural fairy tale. This research question interconnected with Vygotsky’s theoretical concepts and the use of pre-reading and drawings as mediation to teach cultural diversity. Participants
used lived experience to create their interpretation reflecting cultural experience. Using Vygotsky’s (1978) ZPD and scaffolding, participants presented mediated translations of “Little Burnt Face” through tool and sign in the reflection of mediated cultural language. Themes included descriptions of campfire, rainbow, and wigwam and engaged in discourse among other participants as well as the teacher-researcher.

The third research question focused on scaffolding the cultural fairy tale “Little Burnt Face” to increase cultural knowledge of Native Americans. Participants were presented with another way to promote commonalities and differences between the identified likeness of “Little Burnt Face” and Cinderella (Meister, 2015) by using cultural codes, cultural surroundings, mythical language, and symbolic messages. The teacher-researcher permitted an open-ended discussion for all participants to scaffold their interpretation of the Native American fairy tale with their familiarity with Cinderella. The fairy tale Cinderella was identified the most during presentation/activity one of this study. Participants were able to ruminate objects through language (sign) to scaffold cultural surroundings such as country, cultural codes as wealth, and mythical language such as “once upon a time.”

The findings of these research questions further identified the need for teacher-researchers to find ways for their students to achieve a mastery level of culture. This realization questioned whether the teacher-researcher was a culturally responsive teacher. Several studies on this issue have incorporated more culturally responsive teaching techniques into teacher education programs (Altun & Yucel-Toy, 2015; Barnett, 2011; Dickson et al., 2016; Ebersole et al., 2016). Due to increased diversity of students entering educational institutions, teachers and educators have incorporated more cultural diversity practices into pedagogical curriculum and
instruction. Results show that teachers gain valuable information from the students in their classrooms (Barnett, 2011; Dickson et al., 2016; Ebersole et al., 2016).

Conclusions

Historically, HGD courses have textbooks assigned as supplemental material at the college where this study took place. The teacher-researcher questioned if the assigned textbook for the HGD class provided proficiency in diverse cultures as supplemental material. Careful analysis of the textbook assigned to this course showed statistical information related to a variety of cultural groups and in line with all stages of human development but was limited on what aspects of culture were responsible for comparison between groups. The textbook presented ethnic-European and reflected the healthy development of majority White populations. In relation to the Native American culture chosen for this study, only one tribe, Navajo, compared to White European. The questions this teacher-researcher raised concerning the assigned textbook not reflecting multi-culturalism or cultural pluralism. The results reflected in the teacher-researcher’s journaling provided a synthesis of pedagogical approaches to the topic of culture. Presentation/activity one granted a perspective of what participants defined as culture and lived experiences they bring into the classroom. Presentation/activity two reinforced this perspective through reflections of cultural-historical stories on the development of early childhood concepts. Students taking HGD courses are required to gain academic knowledge of each stage of the lifespan. Using a cultural fairy tale granted the pedagogical opportunity to evaluate methods of identification of cultural promotion.

Based on the integration of study findings, knowing the level of cultural understanding students present when they enroll in this course will be valuable. Perhaps a measurement of what they know at the beginning of the course be taken to complement the direction the teacher-
researcher proceeds during the remainder of the course. The teacher-researcher using action research can take reconnaissance to evaluate what students bring into the class (Lewin, 1946). The planning part of action research permits time for teacher-researchers to ask questions and get a cultural picture of students entering a new class. In other words, what lived cultural experiences do the students bring to each new class?

**Interpretation of Findings**

The purpose of this action research study was to explore, develop, and describe another possible way to promote diverse cultures through the use of a literary, cultural fairy tale. It was stated several times throughout this research that the teacher-researcher is responsible for assessing SLOs. This study focused on the learning outcome of culture because of the assessment responsibilities mentioned above. Additionally, the teacher-researcher strives to be a culturally responsive teacher, has an intense interest in cultural diversity, and believes that students should be culturally aware. Due to limited time, only one stage of development was used in this study on early childhood cognition. Based on the information in the assigned chapter for this study, literacy and story were chosen as the focus for promoting culture. Students learned that pre-reading toward literacy in language skills significantly improved when children were read stories.

The assigned chapter specifically stated, “Reading to children is one of the most effective paths to literacy” (Papalia & Martorell, 2015, p. 224). Therefore, the use of literature for this study and the identification of another way to promote culture materialized as the likely path. The method of action research and the cyclical process of this method supported this study. During the planning stage, the teacher-researcher explored the categories of literature that would tie early childhood concepts with specific genres of literature. Keeping with the ages of early
childhood, children’s literature was explored. The volume of literature on the use of children’s literature in education is extensive (NCSS, 2017). The CBC (2010) works collaboratively with professional organizations to ensure quality texts have been reviewed and support specific programs. The NCSS (2017) continues to publish a list of recommended books each year based on their ten thematic strands with categories of books meeting academic requirements.

**Implications for Theory**

Based on studies conducted by Bettelheim (2010), Favat (1977), and Zipes (2006, 2012), the genre that children find the most fascinating is fairy and fantasy in the stage of early childhood. These authors suggest the concepts of what children form to the real and ideal self were resolved through fairy tales. The combination of literature on the subject of using children’s literature in education and theorists who specialized in fairy tales lead to the use of a cultural fairy tale for this study. The results that emerged from this study suggested that fairy tales grant a way to explore any culture, not in just one stage of human development, but in all stages in which fairy tales are either written or told.

The national curriculum standards for social studies (NCSS, 2010) is set up to support curriculum and instruction for K-20 teacher educators. It can be used for college instructors, but the adjustment to collegiate standards may need modification. The main difference between this study and previous studies focused more on the HGD course in which the study took place. It is not to say collegiate instructors are not using fairy tales in their classroom. A review of the literature suggested a limited qualitative investigation into the use of fairy tales to teach concepts of human growth and development. One study used a specific autobiography to teach developmental concepts through the eyes of minorities (Boyatzis, 1992). Another study taught human growth and development students the process of creating life books as soft skills training.
for future work with foster children (Korsmo et al., 2009). Therefore, this study contributes to
the scholarly literature on using fairy tales as a way to promote diverse cultures in specific
courses such as HGD. The simple structure of fairy tales and the exhaustive lists of these tales
permits a pedagogical pool to develop curriculum in HGD classrooms.

Another difference between this study and previous studies is the nature of the course in
which fairy tales are being used and the grade level. The use of fairy tales in secondary schools is
well documented (NCSS, 2017). Several recommended books offer a systematic guide to
incorporate the specific use of fairy tales as supplemental material with instruction. Charles
(2009) describes in Fairy Tales in the Classroom the graphic process of using fairy tales through
five tale types. Using a version of her formula from Propp’s morphology, Charles (2009)
transcribed the process of each tale type and how these tales can be re-created depending on the
instruction. Another example is Bosma’s book (1992) Fairy Tales, Fables, Legends, and Myths
describing the process using all types of folktales to teach structure, writing, and critical thinking
that can be incorporated in the curriculum. This book can be used when developing curriculum
and instruction.

Other studies incorporated fairy tales in English as Second Language (ESL) courses.
These studies used fairy tales not only to teach sentence structure and language but also cultural
diversity within the specific tale used in the course (Lwin, 2016). One study dating back to the
mid-1980s used fairy tales to teach cultural diversity using various versions of the same fairy
tale. The study looked at symbol usage within diverse languages that increased targeted language
objectives when teaching students who were learning English. The study provided a closer look
at how specific symbols were intertwined when tales cross language barriers. A current study
used fairy tales with ESL students to teach cultural symbolism for practice in that culture (Yavuz
Another study analyzed traditional fairy tales with ESL material to make a comparison on structure (Rufenacht, McCarthy, & Lamkin, 2011). Using the Gramulator, this study analyzed the texts of ESL reading material and fairy tales. This study as one of the first to evaluate fairy tale text in comparison to the traditional material used to teach ESL students. The study revealed a significant correlation between the language used and specific feature often found in ESL texts (Rufenacht et al., 2011).

Studies on the use of fairy tales to teach symbolism through cultural language and diversity of specific cultures aligned with the present study. Participants in this study were familiar with fairy tales as they are part of American pop culture. When asked, “How are you most familiar with fairy tales?” Most responses related to television exposure and the highest response was Disney. The findings compare with other studies using fairy tales in the use of culture as symbolic representations of people, places, and ways of social interaction. With the secular nature that fairy tales present (Zipes, 2012), these stories create environments of cultural exploration. Besides holding the attention of the participants, these stories allow discourse based on lived experience. This discourse presents an opportunity to bring awareness to fairy tales not commonly known and to present cultures that fall below traditional tales.

Even though fairy tales are predictable and most have a “happy ever after . . .” they are still powerful voices of culture. Using fairy tales lies in how the tale is told and the social context of the audience. The language of fairy tales is simplistic, dependent, and easy to follow. Other studies using fairy tales granted students the exchange of symbolic learning by comparing the familiarity of known tales such as Little Mermaid and Beauty and the Beast (Babauta, 2016). The participants in this study never heard of the Micmac tribe. They were familiar with tribes in the local area, but not the fairy tale or the tribe described. Most of the participants’ responses to
fairy tales directly related to Western culture. Realizing the common cross-cultural difference of how fairy tales travel made connections of globalization. In this study, “Little Burnt Face” was the cultural ambassador to understand Native American people and their cultural story of living, family, and marriage. Through discussion of commonalities and differences in comparison to the traditional fairy tale of Cinderella, participants gained both cultural and development perspectives.

**Implications for Policy**

The results of this study aligned with one student learning outcome requirement for the accreditation of SACSCOC (2011) and Florida statute 1012.98 (FDOE, 2016) for professional development. As long as this course is listed under the Behavioral Social Sciences and the general education AA degree plan, all HGD courses must meet SLO measurements. This study falls in line with the philosophy of SACSCOC (2011) by providing continued education objectives through program improvement. The research documented the process of integrating a fairy tale to meet the SLO measurement of identifying a way to promote diverse cultures. SACSCOC (2011) supports its institutional members and, therefore, the faculty to continue investing in student access to opportunities for learning and most of all, exchanging ideas. SACSCOC (2011) supports accredited institutions that provide support systems and resources for the growth of students attending colleges. All institutions are responsible for quality and effective curriculum. This responsibility is placed on the faculty. The teacher-researcher must meet those guidelines and measure SLOs annually as well as face four- and five-year evaluations. This evaluation is required under the Florida guidelines of professional development. Both SACSCOC (2011) and FDOE (2016) continue to propose the highest level of standards for ensuring qualified educational practices.
Implications for Practice

The teacher-researcher incorporated several professional development standards during this study. First, this teacher-researcher identified learning goals directed at what the students needed to achieve by the end of the course. Human growth and development is a research-oriented course and designed to teach the entire lifespan of the human. Professional development directly aligns with the student’s needs. The SLO measurement is a guideline to achieving those goals. The SLOs also provide a guideline for curriculum and instruction within the HGD course. Content material supports a way to ensure students are successful in preparation for the end of course (EOC) exam. Professional development for this teacher-researcher focused on the targeted SLO through the identification of another way to promote diverse cultures through activities directed for students’ achievement in the content area. Therefore, allowing the teacher-researcher to reflect practices in the classroom and continue to improve practices for the betterment of the students taking HGD classes. Finally, through content, strategies, and practice, this learning environment provided documentation of evidence-based research within the instruction, practice, and classroom feedback of study participants.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study followed the first cyclical process of action research (Lewin, 1946). Action research is a method of continuous cyclical movements, therefore, permitting a continuous process of future evaluation (Mills, 2003). This type of research permits the teacher-researcher to plan, act, observe, and reflect what is happening in real time and time after. The process of participatory action research opens the platform for all unexpected variables. The teacher-researcher who conducted this research plans activities during the entire HGD course within her classroom. Due to the nature of this study as a dissertation, the teacher-researcher was not
allowed to use her classroom. This study was also the first time exploring the use of a cultural fairy tale as a way to promote cultural diversity. It was impossible to accept anything unexpected for outcomes or findings, taking both of these situations into account. The teacher-researcher followed the discourse of the participants with expertise in the field of teaching human growth and development.

Future studies could include other courses taught by this teacher-researcher. Action research is a cyclical process that grants the ability to look at the limitations of a study and form the next cycle for educational improvements in both curriculum and instruction (Mills, 2003). This study was conducted under the umbrella of a qualitative method and provided insight into pedagogical approaches identifying another way to promote culture. Future research could include a mixed method design expanding the concepts of culture through surveys and interviews in alignment with the design of literature presentations in the classroom to meet all student learning outcomes.

**Limitations and Reflexivity**

This study raised questions as to the process of integrating stories, especially fairy tales into the curriculum of this HGD course. This teacher-researcher will continue this study of action and planning using her classroom for future professional developmental practices. The teacher-researcher, after all, is responsible for her students and student learning outcome measurements. The study did not address how outcomes would have been different as it did not reflect her relationship with students taking her course. This limitation was acknowledged as the teacher-researcher did not know the participants in the teacher collaborator’s class. However, questions were contemplated during the observation of the participants who were involved in this study. Specifically, participants’ knowledge of culture and the very essence of diversity were limited.
What knowledge do students bring with them into a college-level course regarding multiculturalism and cultural pluralism? In what ways do instructors present diverse cultures when assigned a textbook that defines cultures through basic statistical information?

Several limitations were recognized during and after the study took place. One limitation from the study by the teacher-researcher was only one HGD classroom was used. Future studies could include not only the teacher collaborator’s classes but the teacher-researcher’s own HGD classes simultaneously. The study was limited to one stage of development, early childhood. Design conceptualization could expand the study to other stages of development and other types of folktales for data comparison.

Additionally, one limitation of this study was cultures only mentioned in the chapter of the assigned text. A future implementation could include cultures not mentioned in the assigned text. Participant selection was a limitation to only HGD students. Students taking other classes listed under Behavioral Social Sciences are also tested on the same SLOs including the targeted SLO of this study.

Overall, the study went as planned. The process of lecturing from the chapter materials and connecting early childhood developmental benchmarks with the activities associated with this study turned out to impact the participants in a positive way. By participating in this study, the students in the class experienced a bit of the developmental process when they first drew a picture, then identified a word, and finally a sentence related to the original fairy tale. In continuing this research, this approach will be used in the future because of the success experienced here. As mentioned above, it may be that students do not have accurate knowledge about what culture is or what it is not. Of course, it would be convenient to believe that students in this teacher-researcher’s own class would have such knowledge, but that is not known.
Because the participants referenced countries rather than culture in the class discussion about the role of culture in development, future interactions of this research will benefit from this teacher-researcher providing a class session specifically on culture. Upon further reflection, an approach that did not work well was collecting data the same day as the introduction to the teacher-researcher. It did not work well because the presentation of material felt rushed and participants probably did not have much time to reflect on what was being discussed.

A different design in collaboration with action research would be narrative inquiry (Kim, 2016). Narrative inquiry grants a further exploration of autobiographical, biographical, or historical information to reevaluate aspects of individuals, groups, or cultures (Kim, 2016). For example, five study participants indicated that their knowledge of fairy tales came from Disney. This teacher-researcher could engage in techniques of narrative inquiry with participants to explore how and why Disney was the source of their knowledge. Such a study would result in different findings that the current study, but would also be a way to culture in a HGD or any other class.

**Chapter Summary**

The teacher-researcher who conducted this study has a deep level of personal ethics as an instructor. There is a professional openness to experience and research the best pedagogical practices. It is essential to ensure all students taking HGD classes acquire what is needed for future goals. These goals provide a platform to evaluate and explore ways of presenting and evaluating material that represents academic standards. Finally, continuing scholarly work for future courses and contributing to best practices in the field of social science is a personal goal. As the teacher-researcher who conducted this study, maintaining a personal commitment to documenting all actions during and after class is an excellent first step to remaining actively
engaged in action research. This dedication will ensure that all moments of interaction reflect shared experience to others in the field. Lessons learned in this action research study reflected the importance of culture and the full support of a man who dedicated his work to the importance of the cultural development of the child, Lev Vygotsky (1928, 1962, 1978). A fairy tale story with a happy ever after.
References


http://dx.doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v27i2/166-181


https://doi.org/10.1080/08856559.1928.10532168


http://doi.org/10/10.1007/s11217-009-9160-4


doi:10.1080/13562517.2014.901958


Appendices
Appendix A: Degree Plan
# Associate in Arts Degree

**Student Name:**

**Student ID No.:**

**Date:**

**Major:**

**Advisor:**

**University/College:**

**NOTE:** An official program of study does not guarantee that financial aid or scholarships will pay for the classes.

## Communications (6 cr.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENC1101</td>
<td>English Comp 1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENC1102</td>
<td>English Comp 2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Humanities (6 cr.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARH1000</td>
<td>Art Appreciation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUM1020</td>
<td>Humanities - Intro</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUL1010</td>
<td>Music Appreciation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHI2010</td>
<td>Intro to Philosophy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE2500</td>
<td>Theater Appreciation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## General Humanities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AML2010</td>
<td>American Literature I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AML2020</td>
<td>American Literature II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARH2050</td>
<td>Art History - Pre-Rom</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARH2061</td>
<td>Art History - Rom</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARH2066</td>
<td>Architecture History</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARH2402</td>
<td>Art History - Modern Art</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENS124A</td>
<td>English Literature I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENS222A</td>
<td>English Literature II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUM2120</td>
<td>Humanities - Contemporary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUM2230</td>
<td>Humanities - Foreign Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIT2090</td>
<td>Contemporary Lit</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIT2110</td>
<td>World Literature I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIT2120</td>
<td>World Literature II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIL2600</td>
<td>Intro to Ethics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL2300</td>
<td>Intro World Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE2071</td>
<td>Humanities-Cinema App</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TH2200</td>
<td>Dramatic Literature</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Mathematics (6 cr.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAC2111</td>
<td>Calculus I</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAC2311</td>
<td>Calculus II</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAC3333</td>
<td>Business Calculus</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAC2312</td>
<td>Calculus III</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAC2313</td>
<td>Calculus IV</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAC204</td>
<td>Into to Discrete Math</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAP3202</td>
<td>Differential Equations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAS2103</td>
<td>Linear Algebra</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTG2268</td>
<td>College Geometry</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Natural Sciences (6 cr.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOT101C</td>
<td>Botany</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSC102S</td>
<td>General Biology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSC103C</td>
<td>Principles of Biology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSC1101C</td>
<td>Principles of Biology II</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSC106C</td>
<td>Anatomy &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSC202C</td>
<td>Human Structure &amp; Function</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZOO101C</td>
<td>Zoology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Physical Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AST1002</td>
<td>Intro to Astronomy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHM1020</td>
<td>Intro to Astrobiology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHM1021</td>
<td>Intro to Chemistry</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHM1045C</td>
<td>Intro to Botany</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAS1000</td>
<td>Earth Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVR101C</td>
<td>Environmental Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLY2010C</td>
<td>Principles of Geology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLY1000C</td>
<td>Principles of Geology II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISC1003</td>
<td>Natural Disasters</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTH1310C</td>
<td>Intro to Meteorology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Social Sciences (6 cr.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANT2300</td>
<td>Intro to Anthropology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANT2290</td>
<td>Intro to Archaeology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRG1002</td>
<td>Human Growth &amp; Dev</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Behavioral Social Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDC2013</td>
<td>Economics I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPS2000</td>
<td>World Regional Geography</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY2012</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC2000</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## General Education Credits 38

## Program Electives (Min.) 24

**Total Credits Minimum** 60

**Foreign Language Exit Requirement Met?**

**Developmental Education Courses:**

- ENGL1001 Integrated Read & Writing 1
- ENGL2000 Developmental Reading 1
- MAT1030 Developmental Math I
- MAT1023 Developmental Math II
- MAT1715 Modified General Math
- MAT1050 Developmental Math II

**KEY:**

- T = Transferred
- = Completed
- O = Need
- Currently Enrolled
- + = Core General Education
- SATC

**Notes:**

**Signatures:**

**Student**

**Date**

**Advisor**

**Date**

**2016-2017 Catalog**
Appendix B: Academic Program Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Rubric
### Academic Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment Rubric:
#### SOCIAL SCIENCE (SS)

**Name of Program:** Associate in Arts  
**Social Science General Education Core Competencies**

**Directions:** For each of the outcomes below, assess the student work according to the criteria met in each category. A score of 2 or higher represents competency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Science Discipline-Specific SLO</th>
<th>Proficient (3)</th>
<th>Developing (2)</th>
<th>Marginal (1)</th>
<th>Not Addressed (0)</th>
<th>Total Met</th>
<th>Total Not Met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SS-1 Recognize the scientific method and research concepts used in the social sciences.</td>
<td>Students are able to apply commonly used research concepts in investigating historical events.</td>
<td>Students have learned to use some research concepts but have not fully mastered the task.</td>
<td>Students demonstrate little evidence of understanding research concepts.</td>
<td>Not addressed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS-2 Identify ways to promote understanding of differences and commonalities within diverse cultures from a global perspective.</td>
<td>Students show a mastery of cultural diversity.</td>
<td>Students show some evidence of understanding cultural diversity.</td>
<td>Students have limited understanding of cultural diversity.</td>
<td>Not addressed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS-3 Use appropriate social, historical, or psychological methods to analyze contemporary issues.</td>
<td>Students have acquired sufficient research methodology in the social sciences to analyze contemporary issues.</td>
<td>Students have acquired some research methodology to analyze contemporary issues.</td>
<td>Students have limited knowledge in research methodology to analyze contemporary issues.</td>
<td>Not addressed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS-4 Describe the effective synthesis of selected ideas, themes, and concepts present in history.</td>
<td>Students have mastery of integration of themes or concepts into historical context.</td>
<td>Students have a significant grasp of the integration of themes or concepts into historical context.</td>
<td>Students show limited ability to integrate themes or concepts into historical context.</td>
<td>Not addressed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total students enrolled**  
**Total number of students with WN/W/FA**  
**Total number of students earning D/F**
Appendix C: Approval Letter from the Research Site’s Institutional Review Board
February 16, 2017

University of West Florida Institutional Review Board
11000 University Parkway
Pensacola, FL 32514

Dear IRB Members:

On behalf of Northwest Florida State College, I am writing to grant permission for Robyn L.
Strickland, a doctoral candidate in the department of Research and Advanced Studies at the
University of West Florida, to use the Social Sciences General Educational Core Competencies rubric
and the academic degree plan form for an Associates of Arts degree in her doctoral proposal
"Integrating Literature in a Human Growth and Development Course using Vygotskian Social
Constructivism." I understand that Robyn L. Strickland will follow guidelines in accordance to the
IRB at the University of West Florida and Northwest Florida State College. We are pleased to
participate in this study and contribute to this important research.

Regards,

Deborah L. Fontaine, Ph.D.
Chair, English/Communications and Social Sciences
850.729.6451
fontaind@nwfsc.edu
Appendix D: National Institutes of Health Certificate
Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Robyn Strickland successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 08/07/2015.

Certification Number: 1810342.
Appendix E: Approval from the University of West Florida Institutional Review Board
Ms. Robyn Strickland
2624 Black Gum Circle
Navarre, FL 32566

Dear Ms. Strickland:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Research Participants Protection has completed its review of your proposal number IRB 2018-140 titled, "Integrating Folktales in a Human Growth and Development Class using Vygotskian Social Constructivism," as it relates to the protection of human participants used in research, and granted approval for you to proceed with your study on 02-23-2018. As a research investigator, please be aware of the following:

* You will immediately report to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to human participants.

* You acknowledge and accept your responsibility for protecting the rights and welfare of human research participants and for complying with all parts of 45 CFR Part 46, the UWF IRB Policy and Procedures, and the decisions of the IRB. You may view these documents on the Research and Sponsored Programs web page at http://research.uwf.edu. You acknowledge completion of the IRB ethical training requirements for researchers as attested in the IRB application.

* You will ensure that legally effective informed consent is obtained and documented. If written consent is required, the consent form must be signed by the participant or the participant's legally authorized representative. A copy is to be given to the person signing the form and a copy kept for your file.

* You will promptly report any proposed changes in previously approved human participant research activities to Research and Sponsored Programs. The proposed changes will not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the participants.

* You are responsible for reporting progress of approved research to Research and Sponsored Programs at the end of the project period 03-31-2018. If the data phase of your project continues beyond the approved end date, you must receive an extension approval from the IRB.

* If using electronic communication for your study, you will first obtain approval from the authority listed on the following web page:
  http://uwf.edu/offices/marketing/resources/broadcast-distribution-standards/

Good luck in your research endeavors. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Research and Sponsored Programs at 850-474-2824 or 850-474-2609 or irb@uwf.edu.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mark Rolsch, Assistant Vice President for Research and Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

Dr. Ludmila Cosio-Lima, Chair, IRB for Human Research Participant Protection
Appendix F: Informed Consent Form
Informed Consent Form: Participatory Action Research Study

Title of Research: Integrating Folktales in a Human Growth and Development Course using Vygotskian Social Constructivism

I. Federal and university regulations require us to obtain signed consent for participation research involving human participants. After reading the statements in section II through IV below, please indicate our consent by signing and dating this form.

II. Statement of Procedure:
This is the informed consent for the participatory action research (PAR) study taking place during the 2018 spring semester at a college in Northwest, Florida. This study is voluntary and confidential. Before you decide to participate, you can contact the primary researcher, Robyn L. Strickland at 850-598-0110 or by email at strickla@uwf.edu, with any questions or concerns.

This study is part of the dissertation requirements for the Ed.D. Program in the department of Research and Advanced Studies at the University of West Florida. The primary purpose of this action research study is to integrate a cultural folktale into a college level human growth and development class (HGD). This study addresses one of the student learning outcomes SLOs) that students taking HGD courses are measured through a departmental exam at the end of the semester.

The method of this research is called Participatory Action Research (PAR). This method allows all participants in the action process of change through narrative feedback. This study follows the student learning outcome of identifying ways to promote understanding of differences and commonalities within diverse cultures from a global perspective, established by the social science general education core competencies. The student learning outcomes (SLOs) are stated in the syllabus for all HGD courses taught at this college.

If you wish to participate in this study, sign your name and write the date. Any information you provide to this study will be kept in strict confidence.

III. Potential Risk of the Study:
This action research study does not seek information that will harm you medically or psychologically. It is primarily concerned with identifying another way to promote diverse cultures in HGD courses in alignment with the SLOs at this college.

IV. Potential Benefits of the Study:
Information obtained from this study may provide another way to promote diverse cultures and understanding of differences and commonalities from a global perspective.

For future courses in HGD, students and professionals teaching this course, information obtained during the presentations may be useful in offering another way to promote diverse cultures in alignment with assigned textbooks and student learning outcomes.

V. Statement of Consent: I certify that I am 18 years of age or older, have read and fully understand the Statement of Procedure given above, and agree to participate in the research study described therein. Permission is given voluntarily and without coercion or undue influence. It is understood that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty of loss of any benefits to which I may otherwise be entitled. I will be provided a copy of this consent form.

Participant’s Name (Please Print)