**To Whom It May Concern:**

 My 8th grade class will be partaking in a 4 week long unit that I have developed, entitled “Diversity Through Art and Media in the Past, Present, and Future.” This unit will be centering on diversity in America and their lives, how they see themselves, and the kinds of representations seen in art and media in the past, present and future.

 At Roosevelt, we take pride in diversity and utilizing fun and innovative learning units to educate and teach respect and group collaboration. Arts based methods of teaching have recently been shown to be effective in motivating students to do well in class and help ignite interest in a variety of subjects. Scholars (Kraehe M. & Brown K., 2011) have performed studies that showed students take great interest in creating art in units that utilize social justice education methods of teaching. Social justice methods have also been shown to help students become very involved and develop critical thinking skills. The innovative unit I have developed follows social justice education pedagogy and centers on diversity and multiculturalism. Studies and articles written by scholars (Stinespring J. & Kennedy L, 1995) showed art history and arts based methods are a wonderful and effective ways of igniting interests and motivation in classrooms. Stinespring and Kennedy also argued multicultural art history units are a powerful and compelling way of bridging discussion of multiculturalism and controversial topics such as stereotypes. The unit I developed utilizes several discussions, group collaboration and three critical thinking activities to confront these topics as well as explore student’s family history and identity. The unit also meets the following state fine arts goals and six of the Illinois standards for fine arts.

STATE GOAL 25: Know the language of the arts.

A. Understand the sensory elements, organizational principles and expressive qualities of the arts.

* 25. A.3d Visual Arts: Identify and describe the elements of value, perspective and color schemes; the principles of contrast, emphasis and unity; and the expressive qualities of thematic development and sequence.
* 25. A.3e Visual Arts: Analyze how the elements and principles can be organized to convey meaning through a variety of media and technology.

B. Understand the similarities, distinctions and connections in and among the arts.

* 25. B.3 Compare and contrast the elements and principles in two or more art works that share similar themes.

*STATE GOAL 26:* Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced.

Understand processes, traditional tools and modern technologies used in the arts.

26. A.3e Visual Arts: Describe how the choices of tools/technologies and processes are used to create specific effects in the arts.

STATE GOAL 27: Understand the role of the arts in civilizations, past and present.

Analyze how the arts function in history, society and everyday life.

* 27. A.3b Compare and contrast how the arts function in ceremony, technology, politics, communication and entertainment. Understand how the arts shape and reflect history, society and everyday life.
* 27. B.3 Know and describe how artists and their works shape culture and increase understanding of societies, past and present.

My unit will include the following lesson plans:

1. Personal History and Identity

In this activity, students will be given the opportunity to learn and explore their family history, where they came from and what that means to them, how they perceive themselves, stereotypes and how they identify as a person. Students will watch several clips from the films Big Enough (2005), No Bigger Than a Minute (2006) and Off and Running (2008) to instigate discussions and critical thinking activities. As homework, students will create self-portraits of themselves that reflect their history and identity.

2. Representations in Art History and Media

In the second activity, stereotypes will be discussed alongside examples in art and the media. Students will reflect on how they feel about these representations and be challenged to try and identify the message the artist is trying to convey. Students will also be shown how choice of words, color, contrast, and other tools that can be used to convey a message and perspective to the audience. As homework, students will create their own pieces of art that convey a message. Student work will be displayed and presented on the classroom wall. Students will also be encouraged to begin planning their final project. The lessons build up to a final project, in which students will complete and present a brief essay and art project of their choice about what they have learned from the unit.

3. The Future of Diversity

In the final activity, the class will discuss art in public, political messages in art, and be challenged to consider what kind of future they see for the United States regarding diversity and multiculturalism, and what they have learned. Current topics and relevant controversies will also be discussed. The lessons will build up to a final project, in which students will complete and present a brief essay and art project of their choice about what they have learned from the unit.

Feel free to contact me at (123) 456-7890 or 123@gmail.com with any questions, comments or concerns.

Meghan Gardner