

Out of Africa: A Multigenre Excursion

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Abstract

How can a research project motivate students to use their individual strengths and interests when communicating their knowledge? During our Africa unit, my fourth grade students were engaged in research of their favorite animals of Africa. Through the implementation of a Multigenre Research Project in our classroom, I observed my students express themselves and their knowledge with poetry, art, puppet shows, and other creative medium. These means of expression provided me with a multifaceted view of these growing writers as they embarked on a journey to find their unique voices.

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Background Information

Description of Teaching Context

Fourth grade is an exciting time in a student's elementary school career. It's a transition year of new friendships, new concepts, and new discoveries. Ask any fourth grader -- it is a big year. I am an intern in fourth grade at Houserville Elementary in the State College Area School District, State College, Pennsylvania. My mentor, Mr. William Benson, and I have quite a variety of learners in our fourth grade class. A total of 19 students, 11 females and 8 males, make up our classroom. These 19 children bring diverse personalities and unique experiences that enhance the strong dynamics of our classroom.

Academically, we have a diverse classroom of learners. I would consider six of the students to have very high reading and mathematical abilities. They are able to follow directions, work independently, are self-motivated, and always complete assignments. We also have a few students who struggle to match the rigorous pace of their classmates. Two boys have IEP's that require learning support for reading. Three girls go to Title I for reading on a daily basis. Two of these girls also receive Title I instruction in mathematics. One of our students is gifted and talented in her writing abilities and receives extra writing instruction once a week. My students continue to amaze me with just how capable they really are. I have seen a tremendous amount of growth this year in all subject areas. I have witnessed the children blossom into more conscientious learners who are able to clearly articulate their learning in a variety of ways.

On a social level, eight of my students are consistent leaders in the classroom. They are outgoing, friendly toward all students, and willing to work with others. We have a couple of very quiet girls in the class. They prefer to work alone and keep to themselves when in class and on the playground. As a whole, my students prefer working when with their close friends on assignments and group work. However, they are willing to accept others into their groups when asked. Overall, my students have high regards and a genuine care for others. Their upstanding morals and values are very promising for fourth graders.

My students are also diverse in terms of their interests, for which they show particular strengths. They are interested in a wide variety of activities including sports, music, theater, caring for pets, playing with friends, collecting cards, and reading. The wide variety of interests

defines who my students are and how they interact with each other. As teachers, we try to capitalize on these interests and do things that can be appealing to a wide variety of students. My students have so much to bring to our classroom in terms of their strengths and unique personalities.

The Beginnings of My Inquiry

Prior to my inquiry, writing instruction in our classroom encompassed research reports, poetry, creative stories, responses to reading, and journal entries. Students also received instruction in basic grammar and proofreading skills through writing lessons and activities.

I became familiar with the idea of a Multigenre Research Project (MGRP) after learning about it in a Language and Literacy Education course (LL ED 400) at Penn State University. We were presented with the concept of a research project in which students were encouraged to use a variety of genres to supplement the standard research report. I was immediately intrigued with the idea and was anxious to try it one day in my own classroom. After observing my students engage in research of Native American topics earlier in the year and write research papers on their topics, I began to contemplate the idea of using a MGRP in our classroom.

Upon further contemplation of the MGRP, I began to realize the value a project such as this might have in our classroom. I was interested in implementing a project that integrated writing and art into a fun and meaningful experience. I was also searching for a way to allow all of my growing writers, regardless of ability level, to feel more comfortable expressing what they had learned in a way other than a lengthy research report. Current research on the MGRP was abundant. I turned to experts in the field, such as Tom Romano and Camille Allen, who had done an extensive amount of research and had perfected the MGRP in their own teaching practices.

Current Research

Much research has been done on the MGRP, particularly its effects in secondary and collegiate classrooms. However, limited research has suggested or encouraged implementing a MGRP in elementary classrooms. Camille Allen's *The Multigenre Research Paper: Voice, Passion, and Discovery in Grades 4-6*, suggests the idea of modifying the MGRP for use in intermediate and upper intermediate classrooms.

Much of the research focuses on the realm of important skills the MGRP teaches students. They practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening, which is quite helpful for communication in future classroom and career situations. Students also learn how to properly conduct research (Allen, 2001). Moulton (1999) and Grierson (1999) also note the importance of learning research skills through the MGRP, stating that real connections are made when students enjoy what they are researching and how they are writing about it.

Romano (2001) believes largely in allowing students to write in authentic voices, which is quite possible with the MGRP. Students complete real life writing consisting of letters, memos, invoices, maps, recipes, directions or instructions, flyers, etc. during the MGRP process. It becomes a valuable exercise in writing for life rather than school (Moulton, 1999). Allen (2001) states that many students claim this type of writing better prepares them for future writing assignments.

Multigenre writing is also viewed by students as more personal (Moulton, 1999). When writing is personal, it is more enjoyable. Students often find themselves totally engulfed in their MGRP and really allow their creative juices to flow. Many even choose to work on their projects outside of school. As goals are accomplished and final projects begin to come together, students see themselves as experts and truly enjoy telling others about what they have learned (Allen, 2001).

The ideas of many prominent theorists in the education field support the teachings of the MGRP. The MGRP justifies these theories proposed by Brian Cambourne, Michael Halliday and Howard Gardner.

Cambourne's Conditions for Learning (immersion, demonstration, expectation, responsibility, employment, approximation, and response) are fulfilled through the Multigenre Research Project (1989). Students become completely engaged in their projects. They are immersed in different types of written language and genres. The teacher demonstrates exactly what he or she wants the MGRP to look like. He or she also has great expectations for students' success during the entire process. Students take full responsibility for completing their projects and incorporating the required elements. The teacher also provides plenty of time in the classroom for student employment. He or she encourages and accepts approximations while giving appropriate constructive criticism when needed.

Halliday's types of language serve many functions and are instructional, regulatory, interactional, personal, imaginative, heuristic, expressive, and informative (1976). The MGRP incorporates all of these functions. Planning and discussing topics can serve as instructional. Students will observe the teacher using regulatory language when listening to instructions and lessons. He or she may also be the one using this language when working in small groups. Interactional language occurs when students share their projects in small groups. Personal language is employed when students share their projects with the whole class. Heuristic language arises as students ask questions about what they are supposed to be doing, etc. Imaginative language may occur if a student chooses to read an original writing through a dramatization of the piece. Expressive language occurs through the entire process of writing and conferencing with peers and teacher. Informative language is employed as students communicate what they have learned to others.

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences revolves around the idea that people may be proficient or advanced in certain areas and not in others (1983). The eight intelligences are bodily-kinesthetic, musical, mathematical, verbal, interpersonal, intrapersonal, spatial, and naturalistic. The areas can easily be incorporated into the MGRP because students are given choice about what types of genres they want to include. Most students choose to complete genres that they feel comfortable doing. For example, a student may feel that he or she is unskilled at writing original song lyrics and would rather include a drawing or painting instead.

Wonderings

When considering implementing Multigenre Research in my classroom, I had many questions. I was familiar with the process of the MGRP, but was unsure of what the outcomes or products would be. I began to wonder a) how students' strengths and interests could affect their voice and freedom of expression in writing, and b) more specifically, could a MGRP motivate students to use their interests and strengths to communicate their distinct voices through research.

A writer's voice reveals his or her personality. Nineteen distinct personalities make up our classroom. These personalities translate into nineteen completely unique students in terms of what they produce when they write, draw, perform, etc. Unfortunately, standard research papers normally do not encourage expression of unique, individual voices. This type of writing has

many technicalities that discourage students from expressing their distinct voices. Of course, knowing how to write a great research paper is a crucial to a student's academic success. So, this is not to say that students should not be taught how to write good research papers, filled with intelligent words and astounding facts. Many other occasions in a student's academic career will require more than knowing how to write a good research paper. The MGRP nicely supplements the standard research report once students have acquired the proper mechanics.

After observing my students complete various writing assignments throughout the year, I became aware of the different backgrounds and writing experiences my students were bringing to the classroom. Thus, as my research of the MGRP began, I had other additional wonderings about meeting the diverse needs of my fourth grade students, such as:

- How will students show ownership of the topic or genre?
- Is a project such as this beneficial to struggling writers?
- Will students at the elementary level realize the value of voice?
- Does a MGRP result in increased confidence or sense of self worth?
- Is students' depth of learning greater upon completion of a MGRP?

Inquiry Plan

Inquiry in the Classroom

Upon returning from spring break at the beginning of March, it was time to begin a new unit of study for the fourth grade social studies curriculum. I wanted to give the students the opportunity to choose their research topics; however, I needed to narrow down their choices to something specific pertaining to Africa. Because most young children are interested in animals, I decided to allow them to choose an African animal they were most interested in researching.

To motivate and excite the students about what was to come, I created a bulletin board specifically for our research (See Appendix H). The bulletin board included a poster of approximately 50 animals from the different regions of Africa. Since most of the students were not familiar with African animals other than the elephant, lion, cheetah, etc., this poster was helpful to the students when deciding which animal to research. I told the students about a research project we would be starting the following week and encouraged them to study the poster during free time to find an animal they would possibly be interested in researching.

The following week, I formally introduced the MGRP in our class by presenting my own project on the African hedgehog. This sample served as a motivational tool to stimulate students about the upcoming work they would be doing with their selected animals. For my project, I chose to include a wide variety of genres in my project to give the students an idea of what was really involved in “multigenre research”.

After my presentation, we discussed the term “multigenre”. The students were familiar with the use of the word “genre” when referring to different types of books they were required to read in library class. I invited them to think about the word “genre” and how they could use it when referring to what I had just presented. The students then began naming some of the genres I had used in my project and some others I had not used. They were able to define “multigenre” as bringing many genres together into a research project. As a class, we then discussed more genres that would be appropriate for their African animal research and created a list of possible genres they could use (See Table 1). The genres were then added to the bulletin board.

Table 1: Genres for African Animal Research

Clay Sculpture	Expository	Map	Painting	Puzzles
Collage	Fable	Mask	Photos	Quiz
Comic Strip	Fact Sheet	Music	Picture Book	Riddles/Jokes
Dance	Folklore	Myth	Poetry	Script/Play
Diorama	Game	Nature Magazine	Poster	Short Story
Drawing	Legend	Newspaper	Puppet Show	Song Lyrics

Table 1: A student-generated list of genres appropriate for Multigenre Research of African animals.

I distributed the project rubrics to the students and talked about exactly what they needed to include in their projects (See Appendix A). I decided to require the students write a short expository on their animal, a bibliography listing their sources, two different types of poetry, and four other genres of their choice. Most of the students seemed very eager to begin and were already planning which genres to include in their projects.

After the discussion of the process of the MGRP, the students were ready to choose their animals. I used a lottery system to organize the sign up, and each student chose a different African animal (See Appendix B). In the days that followed I noticed the anticipation in the students to begin researching. When students first entered the room each morning, small groups

would often congregate by the poster of animals, commenting on their animals and asking questions of others.

For the next two weeks, the students researched their animals. Twice a week, computer lab time was devoted to research. I created a helpful list of Internet websites for the students to use when researching in the lab (See Appendix C). Students were also given ample time for research in the library during these two weeks. I encouraged the students to find a wide variety of sources for their research, including websites, books, and encyclopedias. The students were also required to keep track of their sources for the bibliography at the end of their reports.

Over the next four weeks, students engaged in writing their research reports, writing poetry, and creating the genres that would make up their projects. We allotted two to three time slots per week to work on the projects, ranging from thirty minutes to two hours each session. My mentor and I allowed the students to work on their projects in various rooms throughout the building, and often divided our time between groups of students working in the library, computer lab, and classroom.

Initially, I was concerned the students would feel overwhelmed with the amount they needed to complete for the projects. However, I heard no complaints about the amount of work involved, and actually heard many comments about how much fun they were having. One student, upon realizing we were not going to have time to work on the projects that day, stated, “Ms. Johnson, why can’t we do MGRP today? I have a good idea for a genre I want to do.” I overheard another student explain to a friend in another class, “These are the genres we are working on for Multigenre Research. It’s really cool.” My worries about students feeling overwhelmed quickly disappeared as soon as I realized many of them had completed more than the required amount of genres.

I used a checklist to help each student manage his or her project (See Appendix D). This was helpful to them in keeping track of what they had finished and what they still had to work on before the presentations. By the fifth week, the students were able to share some of their genres with their parents during conferences. It was a nice way to show their parents the hard work they had been doing in the classroom.

The sixth and final week was spent finishing and putting together projects. We divided the students into two groups for the presentations, which were held on two separate days in order to accommodate to instrument lessons and other schedule changes. Each student was required to

stand in front of the class and share his or her projects. Many of the students chose to read excerpts from their reports or their favorite poems. Many shared their stories, recipes, and art projects. Two students even chose to perform music as a supplement to the animal they had researched. Perhaps the most entertaining of the genres were the puppet shows written and performed by three separate groups of students. They included facts as well as elements of humor into the skits, which was very amusing for their peers (See Appendix H). Table 2 lists the variety of genres my students chose to create.

Table 2: Popular Genres

Genre	Number of Students
Clay Sculpture	12
Collage	3
Diagram	1
Jigsaw Puzzle	2
Jokes	1
Map	3
Mask	2
Music	2
Newspaper	2
Painting	9
Poster	10
Puppet Show	5
Recipe	9
Story	3
Word Puzzles	11

Table 2: Indicates genres created by students and the number of students who created each one. Most popular genres were clay sculptures, word puzzles, paintings, and recipes.

Data Collection

Data collection in my classroom was an ongoing process over the course of six weeks as students worked on their Multigenre Research Projects. The data I collected has helped me form

claims about my inquiry. To follow is a list of the methods I used to collect data a short description of the data:

- Student Writing Survey (Appendix E)

At the beginning of my inquiry, I wanted to determine students' attitudes toward writing and the research process in general. I began with an initial writing survey geared toward gaining an understanding of my students' preferences for writing.

- Student Interviews (Appendix F)

At the culmination of the projects, students completed a short informal interview. I interviewed each student individually to gain a sense of why he or she had chosen certain genres. I was interested in seeing if what they had created matched their preferences for writing and reading in the initial survey. Knowing my students' interests and strengths, I also wanted to see if they chose genres that allowed their voices to shine through.

- Student Culmination Survey (Appendix G)

This purpose of this survey was to learn the students' feelings about the MGRP process and whether or not they enjoyed doing the projects.

- Photos (Appendix H)

The photographs I took during the six-week span illustrate my observations of what was going on in our classroom during this time. I was able to capture some nice shots of students working and remaining engaged as well as presenting their finished products.

- Student Samples (Appendix I)

The samples of my students' work are perhaps the most important indicator of the success of the MGRP. Each piece says a little about the personality of the person behind the writing. Samples of students' work are also evident in the photographs (See Appendix H).

Data Analysis

- Student Writing Survey (Appendix E)

When asked about the most difficult part of writing, students commonly responded with “spelling, putting thoughts on paper, using descriptive words, writing long sentences, writing creative or interesting stories, and putting sentences in order.” This intrigued my initial interest in the effect a MGRP would have on curtailing some of these difficulties. It was my hope to see the students write freely and take more risks with their choice of words because of freedom they had with this project.

Through a ranking system of one to ten, I was able to gain a feel for students writing preferences. I determined that the students seemed to really like writing research reports, creative stories, and poetry. Students seemed to dislike writing biographies, reading responses, folktales, and fantasy fiction. Writing song lyrics was divided because about half indicated they really liked it, whereas the other half did not like it. Writing newspaper articles and journal/diary entries was also divided.

When responding to the question about their strengths as writers, most students were not able to list their strengths and simply replied, “I don’t know” or “I don’t have any”. Also, some students chose to list a genre of writing they felt was their strength, such as history or fiction writing. Some responses included “writing about myself, making sure what I write makes sense, taking my time at writing, and creative words.”

I compared the responses for this survey with the genres the children chose to complete and also their responses on the culmination survey and interview. It was interesting to see that those who indicated research reports as their top choice for writing still chose the research report as their favorite component of the MGRP. I also found the difficulty in writing was not as apparent in the MGRP; rather it was the organization of the project that caused the most difficulty.

- Culmination Survey (Appendix F)

I conducted this survey after the completion of the projects. The responses gave me insight to how my students felt about Multigenre Research in general. Some selected responses to my three questions are:

1. Did you enjoy doing your MGRP? Why or why not?

“I really liked doing MGRP. It was something that I could choose what to do and no one could do it the same way I did. I can write whatever I want to so it makes MGRP very enjoyable.”

“Yes, because you don’t have to just research. You do more than that, you express yourself with what you do.”

“I enjoyed MGRP because we could make things. I also think you get to share more work.”

“Yes. I did enjoy my MGRP very much because I love rhinos very much. It was neat doing stuff about rhinos.”

2. What was hard about doing your MGRP?

“I think what was hard was trying to do everything on time and making it look good too.”

“Getting all your genres done and keeping track of your 4 or 5 genres. But it turned out ok once you had everything under control.”

“MGRP wasn’t that hard. Making everything was very easy. I would have to say that for me the hardest part was choosing what I wanted to do.”

“Really getting everything together.”

3. If you had a choice, would you rather do a regular research report or a MGRP? Why?

“A MGRP because people would think it was more fun.”

“I would rather do MGRP because we get to do neat projects that I really like.”

“I would rather do MGRP because I have choice to do things that represent my talents.”

“MGRP, because you got to add stuff on to the project like word searches and paintings.”

“I would definitely do a MGRP because if you do a plain old research report it gets kind of boring. If you do a MGRP you write a short report and do fun and exciting projects.”

“MGRP because you’re just not doing a report and you’re having more fun.”

“MGRP because I like it better because you can pick different things to do.”

The general consensus I gathered from the results of this survey is that it was an enjoyable experience for my students. Their responses indicate that it was fun to do the different genres and when asked for a preference, they would choose a MGRP over a standard research report.

- Student Interviews (Appendix G)

Some selected student responses from the interview are as follows:

1. Tell me about your favorite piece in your MGRP and describe why it is best.

“The sculpture. It was fun to make. I like working with clay and paint.”

“The poster. I liked putting the pictures on and doing bubble letters. It was fun to do.”

“Guitar performance. I like to play guitar and I’m good at it.”

“Poster. I could do whatever I wanted to make it look cool, like drawing and coloring it.”

“The report. I liked finding the facts about my animal and writing about it.”

2. Tell me about your least favorite piece in your MGRP and why it is your least favorite.

“The report. It was hard to find the information and I don’t like to write much.”

“Poetry. I’m not good at writing poetry unless it’s my own topic.”

“The painting. I saw everyone else doing it and though it looked like fun. I thought I would be a better painter, but I really messed it up.”

“Clay sculpture. I tried to make it look like a hyena but it doesn’t look real or give me a feel for how the animal really is. It didn’t turn out how I pictured it in my head.”

3. How or why did you choose your extra genres?

“I chose to write a story because I thought it would be fun for someone to read. It wouldn’t be all factual but would show what it does everyday. I could make up characters that could talk, which was fun.”

“I chose things I knew I could do and would be fun.”

“I didn’t do a drawing or painting because I’m not good at it.”

“I did a clay sculpture because I had never done one before and thought it would be fun.”

“The newspaper story was something different from everyone else so that’s why I did it.”

The interviews showed me that my students chose genres based on their interests and strengths. Some students chose to take risks with the pieces they were including in their projects. Even though they had no experience with certain genres, they were willing to make an attempt at doing something unfamiliar.

- Photos (Appendix H) and Student Samples (Appendix I)

The photographs I took are a crucial part of my data because they illustrate the hard work and effort my students put into their projects. The photos show my students engaged and motivated as they were conducting research and creating genres. They are shown manipulating materials and having fun working with others.

The samples of student work are a representation of the quality of work most of my students produced. Along with the physical models students made (sculptures, paintings, posters, etc.), these samples serve as good indicators of the diverse personalities and voices of my students. Each piece has its own unique voice, as determined by the writer. The students have done a nice job of expressing themselves and their knowledge through the various selection of genres.

Findings

Claims

Claim A: Multigenre Research Projects motivate students to do their best work by keeping their interest levels peaked.

At first I thought that the excitement exuded by the children at the beginning of the project would disintegrate after a few weeks of work. However, this was not the case. Daily I observed the students become totally engaged in the creation of their MGRP’s. I watched students who normally have to be pushed to complete their work move forward at rapid speed when working on their projects. Many of my students went above and beyond what was expected of them. In fact, about half of the students in my class chose to complete more than the required amount of genres.

Claim B: The MGRP adds an element of fun to teaching elementary students the research process and how to convey their knowledge in different ways.

The MGRP was enjoyable for both me as the teacher and for the students as well. I enjoyed teaching the students the process of the MGRP and aiding them as they created a wide variety of pieces to support their research. Because the students were encouraged to create pieces that were personally meaningful to them, I obtained many quotes from the students pertaining to how much fun they were having working on their genres. One student wrote on a survey, “I would definitely like to do a MGRP again because if you do a plain old research report it gets kind of boring. If you do a MGRP you write a short report and do fun and exciting projects.”

Claim C: Because my students are a diverse group with different strengths and interests, they are able to express themselves through genres based on their individual preferences.

One of the biggest issues for teachers today is accommodating to every type of learner in the classroom. Rowe, Fitch, and Bass (2001) looks at diversity as it pertains to individual learners in a classroom. Academically, the diversity of a classroom can be widely varied, as students are reading and writing at levels that may differ from their classmates. With the MGRP, teachers can meet the diverse needs of every single student in the class by allowing students to select genres they enjoy doing. A Multigenre Research Project allows each student to feel a sense of pride and accomplishment upon completion of the project.

Oftentimes students are not interested in a topic because it is not exciting or doesn't pertain to them. Rowe, Fitch, and Bass (2001) stress the importance of choosing writing assignments that are interesting to all groups of students within a classroom. If students are confident about their topic, they will be more likely to enjoy writing in the future.

I compared data collected in the initial writing survey with the genres each student completed. Based on what my students chose as their favorite types of writing and also my own personal knowledge of their interests, I observed similarities between their interests and which genres they chose. Upon analyzing student interviews conducted at the culmination of the projects, I noticed positive responses in the realm of freedom of choice. Most students stated they enjoyed doing the MGRP because as stated by one of my students, “...it was something that

I could choose what to do and no one could do it the same way I did. I can write whatever I want to so it makes the MGRP very enjoyable.”

Claim D: The MGRP fosters creativity in students that is normally not apparent in standard research reports.

While traditional research writing is often separated from creative writing, the MGRP blends research and creativity in a way that is enjoyable for students (Moulton, 1999). As seen earlier in Table 2, my students chose to complete a variety of genres to display their knowledge.

Claim E: Through the creation of different genres to accompany research done on their African animals, my students expressed themselves by adopting a unique voice evident in each genre.

Voice can be discovered through a variety of genres. Passion for a particular genre or topic allows voice to shine through. When I was thinking about what genres to allow the students to choose from, I realized that the possibilities are endless. I did not want to discourage students from not choosing certain genres. I encouraged them to choose genres they were passionate about. Also, when considering my struggling writers, it was my hope that they would feel good about doing certain genres, and therefore feel a sense of ownership and pride upon completion of the project.

Conclusions and Future Directions

Implications for Future Practice as a Teacher

Now that I know the MGRP can be successfully implemented in a fourth grade classroom, I am interested in doing one again in the future. With the help of my mentor, we were able to help each student be successful with his or her MGRP. He was willing to devote a large portion of our schedule to research and working on the projects. Computer lab availability and an ample amount of computers also played a role in the success. Without this technology available to us, we would have struggled to complete the projects in this time frame. This project easily could have spanned two months or more if we would not have allotted so many work sessions per week.

Of course, the MGRP in our fourth grade classroom was neither a completely perfect process nor product. Some students had difficulty managing their genres, and they found themselves trying to work on four unfinished genres at a time. Even with the checklist, they simply lacked the organizational skills to keep track of their pieces. Also, even though the surveys indicated the students' enjoyment for the MGRP, I sensed some students did not put their best effort into the projects. Many times it seemed like students rushed through genres quickly in order to move on to the next one.

The MGRP is challenging but not overwhelming. Students learn to take pride and ownership in their work. Their knowledge of multiple styles of writing and genres broadens. Communication and collaboration among peers prepares students for future writing experiences. I have also found the Multigenre Research Project to be teacher friendly. It covers a wide spectrum of required standards for education. It is comprehensive and compatible with any unit a teacher decides to teach. Most importantly, students have fun working on their projects, a feat the majority of teachers appreciate.

New Wonderings

As a teacher, it is my job to constantly monitor my own progress and the progress of my students. I feel the MGRP in my classroom was a success, yet there it still room for improvement in both the process and the product. In my reflection of the success of the Multigenre Research Projects in our classroom, I am left with some new wonderings I would like to explore further in my future teaching practice. These questions may guide my planning for the next MGRP. They include:

- What will be the modifications I will have to make for the MGRP when employing it as a single teacher in the classroom?
- How can I modify the MGRP for primary students?
- Would an MGRP be beneficial to the growth of a primary learner?
- How can I better help students manage their genres?
- How can I implement a MGRP without a wide variety of materials and technology?
- How can I encourage students to choose more genres that involve writing?

More importantly than these brand new wonderings, I am happy to have solved my initial wonderings through observing my students' quests to discover their own unique voices through Multigenre Research Projects.

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Appendix A

Multigenre Research Project

The Multigenre Research Project (MGRP) will be unlike anything you have ever done. But, I know you will really enjoy doing it! You will research an African animal. Instead of writing a long research report about your animal, you will write a short, 1-2 page report and also include some original pieces about your animal. You will be telling us what you have learned through these other styles or genres. We will look more closely at the many different genres as we begin writing. You can look at the African animal research bulletin board if you need ideas for different genres.

Rubric (100 points total)

Required parts:

1-2 page expository (10) _____
 Poetry (2 different types) (10) _____

Four other required genres (your choice):

Genre #1 _____ (10)
 Genre #2 _____ (10)
 Genre #3 _____ (10)
 Genre #4 _____ (10)

Bibliography (10) _____
 Content (10) _____
 Creativity (10) _____
 Presentation (10) _____

Total: _____ /100

These projects should be original. What you choose to write, draw, or create is your choice!!! You need to use your creativity to convince us you know a lot about your animal. If you are bursting with ideas and need to share more information, you can do more genres for extra points.

Appendix B

AFRICAN ANIMAL SIGN UP

Aardvark	Hedgehog
African Wild Dog	Hippopotamus
Baboon	Hyena
Bat (Livingstone Fruit Bat)	Impala
Bongo	Leopard
Buffalo (Cape Buffalo)	Lion
Bushbaby	Gorilla (Mountain Gorilla)
Caracal (African or desert lynx)	Oryx
Cheetah	Pangolin
Chimpanzee	Porcupine
Colobus Monkey	Rhinoceros
Duiker	Sable Antelope
Eland	Serval
Elephant (African Elephant)	Sitatunga
Elephant Shrew	Topi
Gazelle (Thomson's Gazelle)	Warthog
Giraffe	Wildebeest
Hartebeest	Zebra

Appendix C

Helpful Websites for African Animal Research

National Geographic for Kids - Fun facts, audio and video clips, maps, and other links to your animal

http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids/creature_feature/archive/

African Wildlife Federation - Click on "Wildlives: African Animals" and search the Wildlife Library for your animal

<http://www.awf.org>

Kidsplanet - Click on "Get the Facts" and search for your animal under the Africa column

<http://www.kidsplanet.org>

African Animals You Might See on Safari - A teacher's trip to tanzania

http://www.ctap3.org/_lperry/africa/animals.htm

Enchanted Learning - Search for a coloring page and facts about your animal

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/coloring/Africa.shtml>

Appendix D

Name _____

MGRP CHECKLIST

_____ 1 - 2 page report

_____ Bibliography

_____ Poem about your animal (#1 style)

_____ Poem about your animal (#2 style)

_____ Genre #1 _____

_____ Genre #2 _____

_____ Genre #3 _____

_____ Genre #4 _____

Appendix E

Please help me by filling out this survey. Read each question carefully and answer honestly. Thanks!! -Ms. Johnson

1. What is the most difficult part of writing for you?

2. What types of pieces do you like to write? Put them in order from 1 to 10 (1 means you do not like, 10 means you like very much):

- Research reports _____
- Creative stories _____
- Poetry _____
- Biographies _____
- Responses to something you read _____
- Song lyrics _____
- Folktales _____
- Fantasy fiction _____
- Newspaper articles _____
- Journal/diary entries _____

3. How would you describe a good writer? (Think about your favorite authors.)

4. What are *your* strengths as a writer?

5. How can you express yourself through writing?

Appendix F

Name _____ Date _____

Please take some time to answer these questions about your Multigenre Research Project (MGRP). Please give your honest opinion.

1. Did you enjoy doing your MGRP? Why or why not?

2. What was hard about doing your MGRP?

3. If you had a choice, would you rather do a regular research report or a MGRP? Why?

Appendix G

Student:

4. Tell me about your favorite piece in your MGRP and describe why it is best.

5. Tell me about your least favorite piece in your MGRP and why it is your least favorite.

6. How or why did you choose your extra genres?