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Angela Skrabec

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Literature of the First Encounters: Using Self-Immersion in the Scholarly Study of First Encounter Texts to Develop a Fifth Grade Text Set

Angela Skrabec

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Bridgewater State University

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Dr. Jennifer Manak, Thesis Director
Dr. Ann Brunjes, Committee Member
Dr. Nicole Glen, Committee Member
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Introduction

The initial interaction between Native Americans and English explorers in the New World during the 1600s is a topic mandated by the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks to be covered in the fifth grade year. Textbooks often provide students with a single perspective of the First Encounters, usually from the English colonial perspective, but rarely show the complicated reality of the historical occurrence. In addition to studying and compiling a list of texts appropriate for use in the fifth grade classroom, my study examined the influence that a knowledgeable background of first encounter texts has upon the quality, multi-perspective children’s literature brought into a fifth grade classroom.

*United States and Its Neighbors: Social Studies for a Changing World* is a fifth grade textbook used within Massachusetts Public Schools (Appendix A). This text presents the encounter in a basic, one-dimensional manner. The interaction between the two groups is introduced by claiming “One day, an Indian walked into Plymouth. To the surprise of the colonists he said ‘Welcome!’ and asked for a drink” (Banks et al. 2005). The text treats the encounter as if the natives just happened to stumble upon the colony of Plymouth and made the decision to aid the English by teaching them how to plant and grow food. The idea that the colonists are the ones who arrived and took the land away from the Indians is not even remotely mentioned. In a later chapter, King Philip’s War and the Pequot War are explained in three small paragraphs by giving a quick account of what happened without digging deeper to expose the tensions and emotions surrounding these wars. No primary sources are referenced in these lessons. The text neglects to fully explain and expand upon the cultural knowledge and practices that the English and the Indians brought to these encounters. The religious beliefs of the English
are mentioned in an earlier chapter, however are not recalled in these passages or brought into connection with the encounters. The one sub-topic that the text does a thorough job of explaining is the differing views of land ownership that the Indians and the English held. It sets up a debate between the two sides and shows students the arguments of both. Overall, what this textbook is missing is a multi-perspective, in-depth explication of the cross-cultural experience that occurred between the Indians and the English during the First Encounters. It was with this evidence in mind that I saw a need and proposed that through the completion of my research project, I would be able to supplement the information found in the textbook with quality children’s literature that would give students a comprehensive, multi-perspective view of the First Encounters.

This interdisciplinary research project integrated training and techniques from two disciplines: English and Elementary Education. The purpose of the project was to immerse myself in the scholarly study of First Encounter (encounter between the natives and English settlers in the New World) texts in order to create a fifth grade text set, a selection of approximately 20-25 quality children’s books that represent a diverse range of reading levels and genres. My research entailed reading a variety of First Encounter literatures and using New Historicism to analyze each as part of my English scholarship. In addition, after reviewing research on literacy education, particularly reader response theory and critical literacy, I developed a fifth grade text set on the First Encounters.

This interdisciplinary thesis intertwines my scholarly research in the fields of both English and Education. My thesis begins by outlining the English scholarly texts that I read in order to develop a scholarly foundation in the literature of First Encounters. This includes both texts written during this time period in Early American history as well as texts that discuss these events in Early American history from a modern author’s perspective. The following section
reviews the literature on literacy education including critical literacy and reader response theory. The next section of my thesis shares the text set that was developed as a product of both my scholarly foundation in the literature of First Encounters and my knowledge of literacy education. The final section of my thesis is a reflection focused on my selection of texts, my experiences upon my research journey, and the valuable insights that I gained into the fields of English and Elementary Education through the completion of my project.

The Development of a Scholarly Foundation in the Literature of First Encounters

I immersed myself in a combination of primary and secondary First Encounters texts in order to gain a well-rounded perspective of First Encounters. These texts were challenging and rich, yet accessible resources of knowledge as I built my scholarly foundation of literature in the First Encounters. A majority of these texts were new to me, although I had previously read a few of them. It did not make a difference whether I had already analyzed the text before or whether the text was completely novel because my purpose for reading these texts was different from any other time. My objective was to dig deep into First Encounters literature from the time period, after the time period, and in-between because I needed to have the best possible understanding of where the Native Americans and the English colonists were coming from. Before I could even think of developing a culturally authentic, historically accurate fifth grade text set that I would someday want to share in a classroom, it was compulsory that I prepare myself.

An initial text that I read for background was William Bradford’s *Of Plymouth Plantation*. It is a seventeenth-century history of Plymouth Plantation, written by its governor, William Bradford. This book taught me to sympathize with the English colonists a little bit. Granted they were not perfect people who made all of the right decisions, but the in-fighting amongst themselves and the poverty of Plymouth made me understand the complexity of this
time period. The settlers of Plymouth were in dire straits with unbelievable pressure for their colony to succeed coming from England, which is just the story that Bradford tells. This text encouraged me to consider gray areas, such as when colonists, trying to feed and protect their own families, stole corn from the Natives. Desperate times call for desperate measures and my view of this time in America’s history began to become complicated. How can you blame a person for stealing when their spouse and children are starving to death before their eyes? The Natives had points of guilt too, such as the captivity they subjected hundreds of English men, women, and children, however they had their reasons too. Natives took hostages in the hopes of protecting themselves and their tribes from annihilation. Bradford’s account tore down the mental dichotomy of English settlers versus Native Americans and showed the true complexity that lies beneath the actions that each group of people made.

Later on in my research journey, I had the opportunity to read professor of American history Jill Lepore’s *The Name of War*. The focus is on the infamous King Philip’s War which occurred from 1675 to 1676, and it shows a very different side of Native Americans from the beloved Thanksgiving Myth. A quick recap: After the death of Sachem or Chief Massasoit, his eldest son Wamsutta takes on the leadership role but quickly falls ill and passes away. Next in line for the position of sachem is Metacom who is better known to us as King Philip. The treaty between Massasoit and the colonists of Plymouth is over. A new generation of settlers has sprouted in Plymouth and the colonial dependence on the Wampanoag Native Americans is no longer deemed necessary. As I read Lepore’s book, one of the things that struck me was how long it took for the tensions to finally reach a boiling point. Not growing up here in New England, my prior knowledge of King Philip’s War was limited, but Lepore’s book opened my eyes to the drawn out process of mounting tensions. When the War finally began and the violent
blood battle for land ensued, the savagery of both the Natives and the colonists again revealed a gray area of extreme complexity. Lepore paints a picture of both the Native Americans and the colonists committing atrocities such as murder and ransacking villages, however her main focus is to show the colonists in a very harsh, yet fair light. The end of the War with the murder of King Philip himself puts colonists in a gruesome light since they speared his head and displayed it in Plymouth town commons for over twenty years. After reading this book, readers should have a good understanding of the complexity of time period.

Nathaniel Philbrick’s *Mayflower* complements Lepore’s text very nicely through its broad overview of New England history from the very beginnings in 1620 to Post-King Philip’s War after 1676. This text serves a baseline that encapsulates the history of the Mayflower and its passengers in 358 pages. The most interesting part of Philbrick’s recounting is the attention to detail in the middle years that often gets left out in elementary social studies textbooks. Americans know about the Pilgrims landing at Plimoth Rock circa 1620 and they know about King Philip’s War in 1675, however few Americans know about what happened in between these cornerstone events. I was in this very position of ignorance until I read Philbrick’s text. There is a misconception that for fifty years the Native Americans and the English colonists lived in peace up until King Philip’s War. However, Nathaniel Philbrick squashes this fallacious understanding by highlighting the Pequot War between the English settlers and the Native Pequot people, the rising tensions that built up for years between the Pokanoet tribe led first by Chief Massasoit’s eldest son Wamsutta and then by Metacom, and finally by telling the story of John Sassamon, a Native American Christian convert who’s murder sparks King Philip’s War. Of course, Philbrick’s book should be read alongside other texts since he excludes women from the history and neglects to give a Native perspective on the Encounters and historical events.
However this text still has value in the scholarly realm of First Encounter texts because Philbrick preaches that by no stretch of the imagination were English-Native relations peaceful from 1620 to 1674. Nathaniel Philbrick filled in this gap in my historical knowledge and led me to understand the adverse relations that sustained from day one of English-Native encounters.

*Early Native Literacies in New England* by American Literature professors Kristina Bross and Hilary E. Wyss was nothing like I thought it was going to be. I was excited to dive into poems, narratives, and creation stories written by Native American authors, but what I found were wills, court proceedings, and diary entries. Native American communities thrive on oral traditions where information is passed down through the generations by word of mouth. Stories were not written on paper, but instead were woven into baskets, strung as wampum, and told through oration. The Native American sense of a text is much broader than the European American understanding. For Natives, anything can be a text not just written stories and documents. With this understanding, Bross and Wyss’s book made more sense to me because they are of European American descent and therefore applied their definition of text as written to the native literacies. Although this book does not show a broad range of true native literacies because the authors do not view texts in the same way that Native Americans do, this book does provide Native perspective on events occurring around the time of the First Encounters in New England.

*After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* is a collection of essays written by James Axtell, an American historian who specializes in American Indian scholarship. This book is a rare yet, important read when studying the First Encounters because it discusses both sides of what most people consider to be the very first encounter between Europeans and Natives. Columbus' exploration and "discovery" of the populated Americas is the
earliest historical event that I analyzed for my research. Axtell's writing is also important because he presents both sides of the story. In America, Columbus is still seen as the hero for "discovering" America and claiming this great land for future generations of Americans. However, the Native perspective of how they viewed the encroaching "strangers," which usually is not told, is surprisingly told right alongside Axtell's discussion of Columbus' perspective. In order to gain a Native perspective of the events that occurred during the interactions of Columbus and the Native Tainos, this book should be read.

"A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson..." as told by Mary Rowlandson, a minister’s wife from Lancaster, Massachusetts, who was captured by Native Americans. This narrative is an important read when studying the First Encounters because King Philip's War was one of the violent interactions that occurred between the Native Americans and the English settlers. It also depicts the common occurrence of English men, women, and children being brought into captivity among the Native peoples. There is a general understanding that Native Americans and English colonists had a rocky relationship. Natives had the land and wanted to keep using it, the settlers wanted the land to build more settlements, and neither side was amicable enough to share. Mary Rowlandson's writing begins with towns being ransacked, hundreds of people being murdered, and several hundred, including herself, being taken captive by Native Americans. Captivity narratives such as Rowlandson's are essential to First Encounter texts because it provides readers with an inside look at a woman's captivity, her eternal loyalty to God and her faith, and her overall experience of interacting with the Native Americans.

highlights the tensions between the Natives and the European settlers. In times of war, women, children, and even on occasion men were forcibly captured by Natives and taken to live in the tribal communities. Even more interesting is the discussion of those captives who decided to create a life within the Native community and never came back to their English colonial towns. Of course, there were some colonists, such as Mary Rowlandson, who were ransomed back to their hometowns, but even still some colonists chose to marry Natives and reject English life. It was mostly the captives who entered captivity in their youth that stayed within their "new" tribal community. For some they did not know/remember a life any different from living among the Natives, so they stayed where life was familiar. Other captives fell in love with Native men and knew they could never return to English colonial society with a Native spouse, so they just stayed. The complexity of First Encounters is yet again highlighted in Ulrich's book by showcasing English captives that wanted to remain living in Native society rather than return to European colonial society. First Encounters is not a clear cut "good guy" versus "bad guy" situation. There are many gray areas that are revealed to me, particularly through my encounter with this scholarly text.

Chapter one from The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675 written by esteemed historian, Bernard Bailyn provides an in-depth look at the establishment of Jamestown and the Native encounters that occurred as a result with particular attention paid to the extreme violence and brutality that escalated quite quickly from initial interactions between the Europeans and the Native Americans. This text is important to First Encounter scholarly texts because it discusses the establishment of Jamestown and the brutal/bloody interactions between the Powhatan Native Americans and the European settlers in Virginia. The Powhatan tribe is native to Virginia and would be analogous to the
Wampanoag tribe being native to New England. A main difference between the New England First Encounters and the Virginian/Jamestown First Encounters is the quick shift to violence. For the Wampanoag tribe, peace was secured by the 1621 treaty between Massasoit and the governor of Plymouth. In Jamestown, there was no such agreement. Upon meeting the Native peoples, the Europeans had an understanding that the Natives were giving them the land forthright. This misunderstanding caused tensions to rise and explode almost immediately. Jamestown colonists wanted to get rid of the Powhatans as soon as they possibly could, so that they could establish the land for themselves. The only issue was that the Powhatan tribe would not go down without a fight. Unlike the Wampanoag tribe which was vulnerable when the European settlers arrived, the Powhatans were a powerhouse of many sub-tribes ready to fight for their land against any strangers, including the European settler intending to settle in Jamestown. For the purposes of my research project, it is important to compare different First Encounters that occurred in different regions of North America, at different time periods in North American history. Much of the scholarly literature that I read focused on First Encounters in New England, but Encounters happened all across America. Therefore, all educators, including myself, need to read texts such as Bailyn's The Barbarous Years so that they we have a firm grasp of First Encounters in other regions.

Howard S. Russell’s Indian New England Before the Mayflower gives readers a rare glimpse into Native American life prior to English settlers establishing colonies in New England. This text is important to scholarly First Encounter texts because it looks at a time often forgotten: the period of Native American life prior to the arrival of European intruders. It is essential to have a background on what life was like in New England when the Native Americans had the land all to themselves in order to understand why the interactions between Native Americans and
European settlers were so tumultuous. Readers need to imagine what it would be like to have your homeland, the land of your ancestors, intruded upon by strangers who intended to take the land away from you and strip the land of its resources for their own benefit. A whole picture comes into focus when Russell provides readers with the knowledge of Native life BEFORE the settlers came to establish homes in New England and the knowledge AFTER the settlers claimed the Native land as their own.

**Literacy Education**

The Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for History and Social Sciences states that a fifth grade student should be able to “Explain the early relationship of the English settlers to the indigenous peoples, or Indians, of North America, including their differing views on ownership or use of land and the conflicts between them (e.g., the Pequot and King Philip’s Wars in New England)” (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2003, p. 29). It becomes the job of the educator to devise effective teaching strategies that take students from their current fourth grade level of understanding and move them forward so these students are able to meet the state standard for a fifth grade level of understanding. While it may seem that the only effective way of teaching complex social studies topics such as the First Encounters is through isolation of content areas, the Common Core Curriculum is guiding educators to incorporate strategies such as critical literacy and reader response theory into all major content areas. The overall goal is to thread English Language Arts skills into every moment of school instruction. Complex social studies topics such as the First Encounters provide educators with the opportunity to reinforce familiar English Language Arts skills while teaching in the new context of social studies. For example, a student is learning about the encounter between the Plymouth colonists and Squanto,
while reading their social studies textbook and they come across a passage that says, “One day an Indian walked into Plymouth. To the surprise of the colonists he said, ‘Welcome!’ and asked for a drink” (Banks et al., 1995). This is the perfect opportunity for a student to practice their reader response skills by determining what in this passage is important, what in this passage is extraneous, and overall how this passage should be interpreted. Students can also utilize their critical literacy strategies by analyzing the text for authentic voice, historically accurate information, and the representation of multiple perspectives. Reader response and critical literacy strategies such as these should not be limited to English/Language Arts discussion, but should cross-over into the study of historical events such as the First Encounters to ensure that students are taking an active role in their learning by looking for an authentic voice, determining which perspectives are being represented within their textbook, and deciding how they, as the reader, should interpret the information that is being presented.

Reader-Response theory is an approach in which “critics theorize about and explore with equal care the reader’s reception of emotions, themes, and values, as well as how meaning is made through the complex interplay of a text and a reader, both of which have interests, characteristics and limitations” (Hall, 2001, p. 46). In other words, this theory takes into account the reader’s thoughts and feelings about the text as much as an evaluation of the text itself. When authors write, they have specific intentions for how the language and words of their word are to be read and interpreted in a certain way. However, in Reader Response theory, the power resides within the reader’s decoding of the text not the author’s carefully crafted intents. It is important to note that in Reader Response theory, the readers themselves are actively participating in the act of reading. The reader makes decisions about what in the text is valuable, what parts of the text can be skimmed through or skipped altogether, and how the text as a whole should be
interpreted. Reader Response theory places the reader at the forefront of the reading experience, allowing the reader to dictate what knowledge is taken away from the text.

Critical literacy is defined as a reader’s active involvement in the reading process through “focus[ing] on issues of power and promotes reflection, transformation, and action” (McLaughlin and DeVoogd, 2004, pg 14). The overarching goals of critical literacy include having students automatically question who the author of a text is, does the author have authority to write on this topic, what does the author want me to believe, and who has the power in the story. Empowerment is brought to the students when they engage in critical literacy instead of passively reading texts where they accept everything the book tells them at face value. Educators strive for their students to have higher order thinking skills and the suggestions for incorporating critical literacy into elementary curriculum from this book are the perfect way to stretch the minds of students. Connection stems, mind and alternative mind portraits, and semantic maps challenge students to comprehend texts on a deeper level. With a strong foundation in critical literacy, both students and teachers will benefit.

**Integrating Critical Literacy into Social Studies Instruction**

Critical literacy and its effective incorporation into the elementary social studies curriculum plays an essential role in interweaving English Language Arts instruction with social studies instruction (Soares and Woods, 2010). Educator resources are advocating for a change in the way teachers educate their students on the social studies topics of Columbus, Native Americans, and the myth of Thanksgiving (Bigelow and Peterson, 2003). The pairing of English Language Arts and social studies reinforces the importance of supplementing textbook information with culturally authentic, historically accurate children’s literature and other texts.
When exclusive use of the textbook is providing students with a non-culturally authentic, inaccurate historical depiction of an event, the educator has a responsibility to provide quality children’s texts that will enhance a students’ ability to gain a well-rounded, multi-perspective viewpoint of the event. In order to reach this end, a text set of twenty to twenty-five quality children’s texts of various genres and reading levels unified by a single topic should be developed.

The Role of Critical Literacy in the “Insider versus Outsider” Debate

Critically analyzing children’s literature on the topic of First Encounters reveals the complexity of the ‘insider versus outsider’ debate within the literary community. The debate questions who can write literature about certain topics from the perspective of a particular class, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. When an outsider writes about a topic, they take a huge risk in possibly neglecting cultural nuances, but if the outsider extensively educates him or herself on the topic by talking to natives of the culture and living among the people of the culture, the story should be authentic (Fox and Short, 2003). Another precaution that should be taken when an outsider is writing a story is to share the story with a few hundred people from the culture. Let these people from the culture read and review the book for cultural inaccuracies or stereotypes. It is of the utmost importance to prevent inauthentic portrayals in children’s literature since children lack the ability to discern cultural authenticity and will most likely believe everything that the book tells them or shows them. On the other side of the debate are cultural insiders who are assumed to have a substantial grasp on their own culture. While this may be true, books written by a cultural native does not necessarily mean that the book is culturally authentic. There is a difference between knowing your own culture and what it means to oneself on a personal
level and having the ability to accurately portray your culture for the general public. Educators need to understand that the selection of children’s literature to be shared in a classroom setting entails a lot more than just surface level research. Educators have a responsibility to their students to provide the best, most culturally authentic books for their students which can only be provided if teachers are up to date on the ‘insider versus outsider’ debate which occurs within the children’s literature community.

**Published Book ≠ Quality Book: Native American Children’s Books**

Around 20,000 children’s books are published each year and among these published children’s books there are hundreds of books about Native Americans (ALA, 2013). However, there is deception, particularly in regards to Native American children’s literature because the “reviewers who do not know enough to know that the works in question are inaccurate, inauthentic, patronizing, full of lies, and altogether a huge insult to the people out of whose lives so much money is being made” approve of these books making consumers believe that the books are of good quality (Seale and Slapin, 2005, p.4). It must be taken into consideration that just because a book was published and may have received an award, it does not mean that the book is culturally authentic and/or historically accurate. The burden is placed on the educator to search for books that have not only made it through publishing, but actually have quality content worth sharing with students. Among the hundreds of children’s books about Native Americans published each year, there are many more poor books than good or excellent books. Educators must weed out the good books from the bad books in order to teach their students about Native Americans in a culturally authentic and historically accurate context.
My Text Set: “First Encounters: An In-Depth Look at Native/Settler Interactions in New England with a Broad Overview of Native/Settler Interactions Across North America”

At the culmination of my research project, I produced a fifth grade text set on the First Encounters. The text set includes twenty-one texts from multiple genres including children’s books, novels, and digital texts (Appendix B). All of the children’s literature ranges in reading level from kindergarten through eighth grade. Within this First Encounters text set, the texts are broken up into smaller categories within the broader topic. There are six categories with a timespan that starts with Columbus in 1492 all the way through to the late 18th century covering many Native American First Encounters across North America. Each text was scored using a rubric that I developed and inter-rater reliability to diminish personal bias. Only texts which scored an overall rating of either ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ on the rubric were included in the text set.

Development of Rubric

In order to determine which texts were exemplary, my mentor Dr. Manak and I developed a rubric that would analyze potential supplemental texts for cultural authenticity and historical accuracy as objectively as humanly possible. To begin, I looked at other rubrics from the field of Elementary Education and the field of literacy education which had similar goals in mind: rating children’s literature on an objective scale of Excellent, Good, or Poor. Using my critical literacy skills from both my English and Elementary Education disciplines, I tried to answer questions such as: Who is the author of this book? What makes him/her qualified to write about Native peoples? How would a Native American child feel after reading this book? The next and final step was stumbling upon the website of Oyate (means “The People”), a Native American/American Indian advocacy and educational organization. Using criteria adapted from How to Tell the Difference by Doris Seale, Beverly Slapin and Rosemary Gonzales, Dr. Manak and I developed a rubric.
Use of the Rubric

Supplemental texts were analyzed using a six page rubric (Appendix C) which looked at several categories such as historical representation and the role of elders. Each category featured guided critical questions which were specific to that particular category. A scale of excellent, good, and poor was used to rate each category. Figure 3 shows an excerpt from the rubric. This ensured that texts with one poor rated category would not receive an overall lower text rating. In addition, at the bottom of each rubric, author and illustrator information was provided as well as notes on the strengths, concerns, and suggested classroom uses of the text. An overall rating of the text was then given based upon the majority rating among all thirteen categories. In order to make this rubric as objective as possible, Dr. Manak and I used inter-rater reliability where we would both separately read and analyze the texts using the rubric and then discuss our ratings and reasoning behind the rating that was given.

Figure 3. Excerpt from my developed rubric. See Appendix C for full rubric.
Columbus 1492-1619

Christopher Columbus is often viewed as a valiant explorer who sailed three ships across the ocean blue in 1492 and then founded America. While this is a romantic notion, these ideas do not capture the entire story. The two texts in this category (Figure. 4) give a voice to the Native Americans who understand Columbus as more of an invader than a noble pioneer. Students need to hear both sides of the story, so they can make a judgment for themselves about Christopher Columbus’ place in America’s history.

**FIRST ENCOUNTERS TEXT SET**

*Figure 4. First Encounters Text Set – Columbus 1492-1619*


King, an American author of Cherokee descent, turns the traditional Columbus story upside down by featuring the Native peoples as the human beings and placing Native peoples as the central focus of the narrative. Students’ misconceptions of viewing Christopher Columbus as
the heroic explorer who founded America while the Native peoples feebly stood by and watched as their land was taken away will ultimately be challenged. The illustrations by William Kent Monkman (Swampy Cree) powerfully depict the active resistance of the Native peoples against the invading Europeans. Collectively, through King’s words and Monkman’s pictures, this text offers students a new, culturally authentic perspective on the ‘heroic’ Christopher Columbus story. While this text is strong in many key characteristics of historical accuracy and cultural authenticity, there are a few shortcomings. For example, in one of the illustrations Natives are depicted as animals which lessens their sophistication and respectability. Also, there is a second illustration where the Native Americans are shopping at the mall and sky diving which portrays Native peoples as materialistic and not so ecologically responsible.


A chapter book written from the perspective of both a Native Taino girl and a Native Taino boy enables all elementary students to relate to and identify with at least one of the main characters. Students learn about the Native Taino peoples and about their way of life prior to Christopher Columbus intruding on their land. Throughout the entire text, the first person narrative alternates from chapter to chapter between the Taino girl and Taino boy. This constant change keeps the reader interested as the text progresses rapidly. After reading this text, students will have a culturally authentic, basic understanding of what Native life looked like before Columbus landed in North America.

**Mayflower- English settlers who established Plymouth 1620**
English men, women, and children made the difficult choice to flee religious persecution in England and set out to sea in search of a new home. The journey was much longer than expected with a time of settlement in Holland, an initial sailing with a ship that failed, and then finally a very long oceanic adventure on a boat that was never meant to be for passengers. In 1620, the English settlers finally landed in Plymouth, Massachusetts. The obstacles along the voyage were difficult to overcome, but the challenges just kept coming with the establishment of the English settlement. The two texts in this category focus on Native American-English colonist interactions during the first year of English settlement (Figure 5).

A narrative chapter book written in a series of diary entries from the perspective of a young Pilgrim girl. An accurate historical timeline is embedded within the diary entries and covers the journey from England to Holland, from Holland to Plymouth, and the eventual settling of a colony in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Students will learn about the struggle to reach Plymouth and the struggles that continued to occur once the colonists established themselves in Plymouth. This text primarily focuses on the Anglo-European colonist perspective with a preferable honest depiction of the plight and hardships the colonists faced, however interactions with Native Americans are discussed in the diary entries.

**Thunder from the Clear Sky**. By Marcia Sewall. Illus. by Marcia Sewall. 1995. 64p. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Gr 6. **Also could be listed under the categories of Native/Colonial Encounters and Rising Tensions between Natives and Colonists.**

A culturally authentic picture book presented from dual perspectives of a Wampanoag narrator and a Pilgrim narrator helps readers understand the two different sides of the First Encounters. This text does a particularly good job at presenting a large portion of Early American history in a way that is appealing and understandable to elementary students. A perceived weakness of Sewall’s text is her use of the terms ‘savage’ and ‘red man’ to describe the Native Americans from the perspective of the Pilgrim narrator, however these terms are used to help children better understand the ethnocentric relationship between the Pilgrims and Native Americans. During this time in history, Pilgrims viewed the Native Americans as lesser beings and therefore used derogative terminology in reference to the Natives.

Native/Colonial Encounters- Interactions between Native Americans and English settlers during the first two years of settling Plymouth including the “First Thanksgiving” 1620-1621
This category highlights the Native American encounters with the English colonists of Plymouth during the initial two year period of settlement. Many of the texts are specific to discrediting the “Thanksgiving Myth” and instead sharing a more historically accurate, culturally authentic portrayal of the 1621 feast shared between the Native Wampanoag and the English colonists (Figure 6).

**Figure 6. First Encounters Text Set- Native/Colonial Encounters 1620-1621**


A read aloud text that engages students’ attention through beautiful photographs that tell a different story from the traditional Thanksgiving Myth. Margaret Bruchac’s Abenaki ancestry lends credibility to this text as a culturally authentic resource that can be shared with students as a means of teaching what actually happened in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1621. Students will
learn that modern Thanksgiving traditions are not founded in the so-called First Thanksgiving meal. In fact, the Thanksgiving Americans celebrate today has nothing to do with the events of 1621. O’Neill Grace and Bruchac’s text will help to dispel any misconceptions students may have about Thanksgiving. This text has many strengths including its historical accuracy of the events that took place in 1621. Although the text uses the loaded word ‘savage’ once to describe Native Americans in the text, it must be noted that Pilgrims viewed the Native Americans as lesser beings and historically did use this derogatory term to describe the Natives.

**1621: Beyond the Myth of the First Thanksgiving DVD.** By Plimoth Plantation. N.d. 12min. Plimoth Plantation. Gr N/A

This text is a culturally authentic multi-media production that exposes the Thanksgiving myth. The footage is set within Plimoth Plantation in Plymouth, Massachusetts. An authentic re-enactment of the first harvest festival from 1621 is narrated by a Wampanoag who shares the Native American view of the so called “First Thanksgiving.” A Native perspective from the time period challenges the traditional American Thanksgiving holiday and encourages students to reconsider their understanding of how Thanksgiving came to be a nationally celebrated holiday.

**Giving Thanks: The 1621 Harvest Feast.** By Kate Waters. Illus. by Russ Kendall. 2001. 40p. Scholastic, Inc. Gr K-3Kate Waters’ text provides a dual perspective, one Native Wampanoag and one Anglo-European, from the eyes of children who participated in the 1621 harvest feast between the Wampanoag and the Plymouth colonists. The Thanksgiving Myth is shattered as this text explains the multi-day celebration as a harvest feast where the Natives and Europeans rejoiced in a good year’s harvest. Students will learn about an event that often is incorrectly dubbed as ‘The First Thanksgiving.’ After reading this text, students will have a more
culturally authentic and historically accurate depiction of what occurred at the 1621 meal shared by Native Americans and colonists.


This is a chapter book written from the perspective of a curious Native boy during the time of the 1621 harvest feast. This story will intrigue elementary students because they can relate to the main characters frustration of wanting to be all grown up. Students will learn about the harvest feast from a Native American author who strives and succeeds in creating a text that is both historically accurate and culturally authentic. While this lengthier text lends itself to a more in-depth study of the Thanksgiving Myth, it is important to note that only one Native tribe is mentioned and described which may lead children to believe that all Native peoples are the same.


A picture book that tells the historically accurate story of the ‘First Thanksgiving’ from a Native perspective. Joseph Bruchac, a Native American author, discusses the ‘First Thanksgiving’ as more of a harvest feast rather than the European myth of a First Thanksgiving holiday/celebration. Students will learn from a culturally authentic Native American viewpoint that the meal shared between Native Americans and European colonists in 1621 does not qualify as the ‘First Thanksgiving.’ They will also learn that the term harvest feast is a more accurate phrase to describe the events that took place in Plymouth, Massachusetts circa 1621. This text will help dismiss the traditional ‘First Thanksgiving’ myths that students are often taught.

A text for elementary educators to read in its entirety prior to teaching students about the supposed ‘First Thanksgiving’ at Plymouth, Massachusetts during 1621. The text complicates the charming story of Native Americans and English colonists sharing a Thanksgiving meal together. Colman uses several quotes and facts gathered from resources from the time period to make her case for the real Thanksgiving story. Excerpts from the text can be used to help students address major misconceptions of the traditional Thanksgiving myths. This text is a wealth of knowledge, however some of the readings from this text are a bit more abstract than the traditional picture or chapter book. When choosing excerpts for students to read, educators need to be aware that some students may have difficulty comprehending the text and making meaningful connections within the text.

Native American Tribes of New England- An overview of prominent Native American tribes living in the New England region

Texts in this category provide students with an introduction to Native tribes indigenous to the six states of New England. Specific tribes that are represented in this category include; Abenaki, Pequot, and Wampanoag (Figure 7).

Ann Rossi’s text covers a broad timespan beginning with Columbus in 1492 and ending in the early 18th century detailing a plethora of First Encounters between Native Americans and Europeans. Students will gain a basic understanding of several major First Encounters that occurred in North America between the 15th and 18th centuries. They will also have the opportunity to compare and contrast Native American perspectives with European settler perspectives. Definitely a good text to use when beginning a unit on First Encounters. A notable weakness is the lack of Native American elders being discussed or depicted in this text.


A culturally authentic picture book that tells a story based on an Abenaki witness’ account of Robert Rogers’ 1759 raid on St. Francis, an Abenaki village in Quebec, Canada.
Margaret Bruchac (Native Abenaki) writes from the perspective of a young Abenaki girl named Malian whose family is affected by Rogers’ raid. Students will learn about a lesser known historical First Encounter that took place outside the bounds of New England. This text will encourage students to recognize interactions between Native Americans and Europeans in North America during the 18th century as one of many First Encounters. While this text is effective in sharing the story of another Native New England Tribe, a weakness is the isolated discussion of the Abenaki peoples without incorporating other nearby tribes which would create a more realistic portrayal.


The story of what life would have been like for a Wampanoag young boy growing up during Pilgrim times. Students will learn about the life of Wampanoag children during the 1600s from a culturally authentic Native child’s perspective. They will also gain a deeper appreciation of the Wampanoag tribe through the text’s inclusion of Wampanoag dialogue and culturally authentic photographs of Wampanoag peoples. This is a great text for introducing students to the Native American tribe of the Wampanoag, however Waters does not mention any other tribes that the Wampanoag’s would have most certainly interacted with.


This non-fiction text provides students with a good, culturally authentic overview of the Native American Pequot tribe. It’s well organized format into separate categories of Pequot life such as government, religion, and early Pequot history make the text easy to read. Occasionally, the book portrays Native Americans of the Pequot nation as reliant on the United States
government for assistance. This is an incorrect depiction of the Pequot nation and should be addressed with students using critical literacy skills.


This culturally authentic text celebrates the Wampanoag people of the past as well as the Wampanoag generations of the present and future. Different aspects of Wampanoag life are explored from daily life and government to the Wampanoag creation story. Students will also specifically learn about “Encounters with Europeans” as well as the important historical event of “King Philip’s War.” Educators need to be aware that a few of the war illustrations are extremely violent and may be disturbing to some elementary students. The text should be previewed prior to sharing with students.

**Rising Tensions between Natives and Colonists- Coverage of the Pequot War and King Philip’s War including cause(s) and effect(s)**

The major wars of Early American history fought between the Native Americans of New England and the English colonists are addressed by texts in this category. Students will learn about the Pequot War of 1637 and King Philip’s War (1675-1676) which are specifically discussed in both of these texts (Figure 8).
**Figure 8. First Encounters Text Set- Rising Tensions between Natives and Colonists**


A most challenging event to teach to elementary students, Mandell’s text provides a children’s version of King Philip’s War while also maintaining historical accuracy and cultural authenticity. Students will learn about the Pequot War, in addition to the more famous King Philip’s War. Although the text is rich in information, the depth and detail of the material may make the information too dense for elementary students to grasp. Selected excerpts for a more focused small group study will help students get the most information out of the text. A great text for its in-depth coverage of the War, however this text falls short in the areas of not depicting or discussing any Native elders and occasionally using language that could be more respectful towards Native Americans.
First Encounters across North America- Encompasses a broad spectrum of different Native American/Settler interactions NOT specific to the New England region

Native interactions with European settlers happened throughout history all over America, Canada, and Central America. Texts of this category broaden the scope of First Encounters beyond the bounds of New England states. Students will learn about First Encounters across North America such as in Jamestown, Virginia and the Dakotas (Figure 9).

**FIRST ENCOUNTERS TEXT SET**


A historically accurate, culturally authentic portrayal of the violent wars that took place between the Powhatans and the Europeans in early 17th century America authored by Karen E. Lange who is of Abenaki native descent. Students will learn about other First Encounters that occurred in North America besides the interactions of Plymouth Rock. This knowledge gleaned from Lange’s book can foster compare and contrast exercises where students can analyze the similarities and differences between First Encounters in Virginia and First Encounters in Massachusetts. This text is strong in its linguistic depiction of the First Encounters in Jamestown,
however the photographs do tell the most complete story because Native Americans are rarely shown.


S.D. Nelson’s innate sense of Native storytelling shares the story of Lakota First Encounters with Europeans which took place in the Dakotas of North America. Students will be encouraged to consider Native American tribes outside of the New England area, in addition to learning about the initial interactions between Lakota peoples and Europeans. Detailed drawings, also crafted by Nelson, introduce readers to the culturally authentic nuances that distinguish Native American, in this case the Lakota, from other Native tribes. Nelson’s book is historically accurate and culturally authentic in so many ways, however the last page where the text says, “My people and I surrendered to the Wha-shi-choos,” is difficult to accept (38). The way this line is written makes it seem as though the Natives are victims and it slightly weakens the power of the text.

**Seneca Coloring Book.** By Jeff Snow, Carson Waterman, and Gailey Watt. 1979. 64p. Salamanca City Central School District. Gr N/A

A coloring book filled with pictures of people from the Big Hills, Seneca nation, cultures and traditions. All of the artwork is culturally authentic and created by local Native Carson Waterman. Students will learn about the Seneca Native Americans as they color pages that are produced and endorsed by Seneca Natives.


Simon Ortiz tells the story of many Native American tribes and their First Encounters with Europeans while staying true to his Native oral storytelling traditions. Students will learn
about multiple First Encounters that took place all across North America and affected multiple
Native American tribes. A great text to expand students’ understanding of First Encounters
beyond the interactions between Native American and European settlers in Plymouth,
Massachusetts. The majority of this text is culturally authentic with the exception of the fact that
the only Native American dwelling depicted is the stereotypical tipi. Although many other tribes
are discussed throughout the book, the only dwelling illustrated is the tipi. This may perpetuate
the stereotype that Native American peoples are all the same and live in tipis.

**The First Peoples of Ohio and Indiana: Native American History Resource Book.** By Jessica
Eaton-Diemer. 2013. 276p. Woodland Indian Educational Programs. Gr N/A

A teacher resource guide which includes lesson plans, worksheets, projects, readings, and
much more to educate students about the First Peoples of Ohio and Indiana. Created by Jessica
Eaton-Diemer, a Native who dedicates her life to educating children and adults about Native
Americans, this is a culturally authentic resource filled with materials that can help students learn
more about Native Americans who are indigenous to the states of Ohio and Indiana.
Discussion

Selection of Texts

Within the English discipline, Dr. Brunjes and I shared the responsibility of selecting First Encounters primary and secondary sources to form the basis of my knowledge of the First Encounters. I had read a few of the texts before when I had taken her Early American course, but most of the texts were new to me. Our goal was to locate a variety of texts written during the time period as well as after the time period, so that my foundational knowledge on the First Encounters was developed from multiple points of view (i.e. colonists, Native Americans, varied socioeconomic status, men, and women) to give me the most accurate picture possible.

Choosing texts to be included in my text set was a lengthy process filled with several weeks of research and of course reading. I gathered as much information and knowledge on the topic of First Encounters as I possibly could. I sought advice from one of my English professors who happens to be of Native American descent, professional texts for elementary educators (i.e., Broken Flute), and researched online using children’s literature databases. With the help of my mentors, I came to define ‘texts’ very broadly including books as well as pictures, maps, audio-visual presentations, or artifacts. Although children’s books made up the major category of texts that I analyzed, I did evaluate other texts such as a children’s coloring book and a Plimoth Plantation DVD. All of the texts that were selected as part of the text set were analyzed using my self-developed rubric that reviewed the texts on their culturally authenticity and historical accuracy of the First Encounters.

Experiences

During my research experience, I had the opportunity to undergo a unique undergraduate research experience. My project incorporated dual elements from English and Elementary
Education which allowed me to explore the usefulness of an English background in the Elementary classroom. I loved having the multi-perspective outlook as I read English texts in search of historical truth that would help me to better understand the circumstances of the Pilgrims and Wampanoag Natives living in the New England area. With a deep understanding of the First Encounters between the two sides, I was able to develop a First Encounters text set that would share my new historical knowledge with elementary students on a developmentally appropriate level. The line of separation between my two disciplines became forever erased with the experience of my interdisciplinary undergraduate research project.

Prior to this project, I had never experienced the role of actively participating in my disciplinary field of English. I read all the time for my English courses and discussed literature on a regular basis, but the reading and discussion for my project was different. Instead of being handed a list of texts to be read, Dr. Brunjes and I selected sources together. I got to go inside Governor William Bradford’s head when I read *Of Plymouth Plantation* and I took a side in King Philip’s War while reading Jill Lepore’s *In the Name of War*. These texts brought history alive through their detailed descriptions of war, captivity, and colonial/native relations. Reading different primary and secondary sources each week allowed me to thoroughly research a very complex time in America’s history. My foundation of First Encounters knowledge grew on a weekly basis with my reading, reflections, and meetings with Dr. Brunjes. After reading each text, I had the outlet of my blog to analyze and review the texts. At our weekly meetings, the one-on-one discussions of texts were complex and thought-provoking. I would read a text for the week and come to the meetings ready to share my opinions. Sometimes I would walk in the door having strong feelings against something and by the time I walked out my feelings had totally shifted. Having face-to-face conversations with a scholar in the field (Dr. Brunjes) made me
realize that I was a part of the English community. No longer was I just sitting in a classroom
taking college English courses, but I was actually performing scholarly research in the field.

Throughout the project, I took on the role of an elementary teacher whose responsibility
is to teach to state curriculum standards using best practices such as reader response theory and
critical literacy. My elementary education mentor (Dr. Manak) and I reviewed the fifth grade
social studies textbook and came to a consensus that supplemental materials were needed to
provide students with a comprehensive point of view on First Encounters. My job was to develop
a text set that would meet the fifth grade curriculum standards while still giving students a
historically accurate and cultural authentic perspective on First Encounters. Dr. Manak facilitated
this goal by assisting me in taking my solid foundation of knowledge on the First Encounters and
applying this knowledge to finding the best First Encounters texts that the world of children’s
literature has to offer. With the guidance of my Elementary Education mentor, I researched using
the Comprehensive Children’s Literature database, collected the potential texts from all over the
Southeastern Massachusetts library network, and then realized that I needed a regulated system
of rating the texts that I found. Being a future teacher, I worked with an expert in the field of
Elementary children’s literature (Dr. Manak) to create an extensive rubric (6 pages in length) so I
could score each text against the same criterion. It was a process to go through countless
children’s texts just find the best twenty-two First Encounters children’s texts available, but it
was well worth it. These experiences are exactly what an elementary teacher goes through when
they are planning a new unit of study and needs great supplementary materials to balance the
information from the textbook. This research project was a realistic experience of what it is like
as an elementary educator.
Concluding Insights

Despite what people might think, educators do not have the summers off. Last summer, I spent ten weeks developing my text set on the First Encounters and continued my analysis throughout the academic year. As a classroom teacher, I envision my summers as researching, planning, and developing great text sets that will supplement the information that is in subject area textbooks. I have seen the value of thoughtfully creating a text set that includes historically accurate and culturally authentic texts. I truly believe that text sets are a great way to teach students new information. The state puts a lot of pressure on educators to meet the curriculum standards, but why not achieve the standard by introducing children to non-fiction picture books, providing students with culturally appropriate coloring pages, and showing them historically accurate representations of events from America’s history? Educators have an obligation to teach to the standards, however interesting and engaging presentations of material still can be achieved. Learning about the benefits of using reader response theory and critical literacy in the elementary classroom made me an advocate for educating students on how to closely read and question texts. Students as young as seven can begin to view themselves as active readers who have a say in how they understand information presented in a text.

College level primary sources can also be used in the elementary classroom. Before this project, I would have never thought to incorporate a text that I read in my junior year of college into a fifth grade elementary unit on the First Encounters. Now, I cannot imagine teaching colonial captivity during King Philip’s War to my future students without using Mary Rowlandson’s text. This text would give students a raw perspective of a pastor’s wife who spent months as a captive of the Wampanoag Indians. Granted the vocabulary may be a bit challenging, but I can thoughtfully select excerpts from primary source documents to use as
learning tools for elementary students. It is so powerful to share a text that was written over 400 years ago by a person who lived during the time period and who actually experienced the event that we are now reading about in our social studies textbooks. There is no better way to learn about history than through the eyes, ears, and mouth of the people who lived that reality.

**Acknowledgement**

I would like to thank the Adrian Tinsley Program for Undergraduate Research and the Office of Undergraduate Research at Bridgewater State University for funding and supporting my research. Thank you to my mentors, Dr. Jenn Manak and Dr. Ann Brunjes, for taking this amazing journey with me. I would also like to thank the faculty members of the Department of Elementary Education and the Department of English at Bridgewater State University for supporting my research endeavor. Last, but not least, a huge thank you to my parents, Neil and Mary Ann Skrabec, for giving me every opportunity to succeed and teaching me to believe in my own potential.
References


**Children’s Literature Cited**


Appendix A

HELP FROM THE INDIANS

One day an Indian walked into Plymouth. To the surprise of the colonists he said, “Welcome!” and asked for a drink. His name was Samoset, and he had learned English from English traders. Several days later, Samoset returned to Plymouth with the Wampanoag (wom’ pən ə ag), who lived nearby, and their chief, Massasoit (mas’ ə soit). With Samoset’s help, the Pilgrims and Massasoit made a peace agreement that lasted for 50 years.
Appendix B

First Encounters: An In-Depth Look at Native/Settler Interactions in New England with a Broad Overview of Native/Settler Interactions Across North America

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Children’s Literature</th>
<th>Scholarly Texts from the English Discipline which Inform Children’s Literature Selections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td><em>Rethinking Columbus</em> (Bigelow and Peterson, 1998)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native/Colonial Encounters-Interactions between Native Americans and English settlers during the first two years of settling Plymouth including the “First Thanksgiving” 1620 – 1621</td>
<td><em>1621: A New Look at Thanksgiving</em> (Grace and Bruchac, 2001)</td>
<td><em>Mayflower</em> (Philbrick, 2006)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Giving Thanks: The 1621 Harvest Feast</em> (Waters, 2001)</td>
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<td><em>Guests</em> (Dorris, 1994)</td>
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<td><em>Squanto’s Journey: The Story of the First Thanksgiving</em> (Bruchac, 2000)</td>
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<td><em>Thanksgiving: The True Story</em> (Colman, 2008)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Thunder From the Clear Sky</em> (Sewall, 1995)</td>
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<td>Critical Literacy: Enhancing Students’ Comprehension of Text (McLauglin and DeVoogd, 2004)</td>
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<td><strong>prominent Native American tribes living in the New England region</strong></td>
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<td><em>Maliyan’s Song</em> (Bruchac, 2005)</td>
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<td><em>The Pequot Tribe</em> (Lassieur, 2002)</td>
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<td><em>The Wampanoag of Massachusetts and Rhode Island</em> (Levy, 2005)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rising Tensions between Natives and Colonists—Coverage of the Pequot War and King Philip’s War including cause(s) and effect(s)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>King Philip’s War: The Conflict over New England</em> (Mandell, 2007)</td>
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<td><em>Thunder From the Clear Sky</em> (Sewall, 1995)</td>
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<td><em>Colonial American Travel Narratives</em> (Martin, 1994)</td>
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<td><em>The Name of War: King Phillip’s War and the Origins of American Identity</em> (Lepore, 1998)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>First Encounters across North America—Encompasses a broad spectrum of different Native American/Settler interactions NOT specific to the New England region</strong></td>
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<td><em>1607: A New Look at Jamestown</em> (Lange, 2007)</td>
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<td><em>Black Elk’s Vision: A Lakota Story</em> (Nelson, 2010)</td>
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<td><em>Crossroads America: Cultures Collide: Native Americans and Europeans 1492-1700</em> (Rossi, 2004)</td>
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<td><em>Seneca Coloring Book</em> (Snow, Waterman, and Watt, 1979)</td>
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<td><em>The People Shall Continue</em> (Ortiz, 1994)</td>
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<td><em>The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675</em> (Bailyn, 2012)</td>
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## Appendix C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Quality Rating</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Look for Stereotypes:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions to consider…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are Native peoples portrayed as savages or uncivilized?</td>
<td>Excellent: Native peoples are consistently shown as human beings, members of highly defined and complex societies. Native societies are always presented as separate from one another, with each culture, language, religion, and dress being unique to its tribe. The overall design of the book is accurate and appropriate to the tribe(s) being discussed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are Native peoples portrayed as extinct?</td>
<td>Good: Native peoples are generally shown as human beings, members of highly defined and complex societies. Native societies are presented as separate from one another, but the distinctions are loosely discussed blurring the differences between one tribe and another. The overall design of the book is generally accurate and appropriate to the tribe(s) being discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are Native Societies oversimplified and generalized?</td>
<td>Poor: Native peoples are shown as sub-human beings, members of generalized, simplistic societies. Native societies are grouped together under one generic category without distinction between each of the various tribes. The overall design of the book is inaccurate and/or inappropriate to the tribe(s) being discussed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is the overall design aesthetic of the book “generic Indian”?</td>
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<td><strong>Look for Loaded Words:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions to consider…</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are there insulting overtones to the book’s language?</td>
<td>Excellent: Language is consistently respectful and worthy of use in reference to any and all other technologically advanced person or group of people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does the book include insulting terms such as <em>Injuns</em>, <em>primitive</em>, and <em>savage</em>?</td>
<td>Good: Language sometimes departs from respectful words that would be offensive if used in reference to any technologically advanced person or group of people.</td>
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<td><strong>Look for Tokenism:</strong></td>
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<td>Questions to consider…</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Do all the Native characters look alike?</td>
<td>Excellent: Native Americans are consistently depicted as genuine individuals, having unique and complex qualities and characteristics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Do the Natives look like white characters with darker faces?</td>
<td>Good: Native Americans are for the most part depicted as genuine individuals, having unique and complex qualities and characteristics.</td>
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<td><strong>Look for Historical Representation:</strong></td>
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<td>Questions to consider…</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are Native Americans consistently placed in the proper perspective: the</td>
<td>Excellent: History is consistently placed in the proper perspective: the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are Native Americans generally placed in the proper perspective: the</td>
<td>Good: History is generally placed in the proper perspective: the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are Native Americans passively placed in the improper perspective: Natives are passively</td>
<td>Poor: History is placed in the improper perspective: Natives are passively</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Is there manipulation of words such as *discovery, victory,* or *massacre?*
- Are Natives represented as responsible for their “disappearance?”
- Is the United States depicted as “only trying to help?”

### Look at the Lifestyles:

**Cultural and Societal**

**Questions to consider…**

- Are Native cultures presented in a condescending manner?
  - Are there paternalistic distinctions between “us” and “them”?
  - Are Natives depicted as needing aid from outsiders, and having no ability to govern their own land and people effectively?
- Are Native peoples discussed only in the past tense or are Natives depicted as active in the present and future too?
- Is a society portrayed in a distorted or limited way?
- Are religions described as “superstitions”?
- Are the dwellings depicted authentic/accurate for the Native tribe being discussed?
- Is the feather placement correct for the Native tribe being discussed/depicted?

### Look for Victimization:

**Questions to consider…**

- Does the story encourage children to believe that the Natives accepted unjust treatment and defeat passively?
- Are Native heroes limited to those who helped the European colonists?

### Look at the Lifestyles:

**Material Objects**

**Questions to consider…**

- Is there an ethnocentric Western focus on material aspects of life. Native peoples are always described as coexisting

### Native struggle for self-determination and sovereignty against the Euro-American drive for conquest and greed.**

- Native struggle for self-determination and sovereignty against the Euro-American drive for conquest and greed.

- Accepting defeat as the helpless victims of Euro-American rule. Natives are presented as being the reason for their own “disappearance.”

**Excellent:**

Native peoples are consistently respected and there is a complete understanding of the sophistication and complexity of their societies. The continuity of their cultures is respected. Values, religion, and morals are connected to the present and are depicted as taking people into the future. Religions are not discussed accurately. The dwellings depicted are authentic/accurate to the tribe being described. The feather placement is correct for the Native tribe being discussed/depicted.

**Good:**

Native peoples are generally respected and there is a general understanding of the sophistication and complexity of their societies. The continuity of their cultures is respected. Values, religion, and morals are connected to the present and are depicted as possibly taking people into the future. Religions are discussed accurately. The dwellings depicted are mostly authentic/accurate to the tribe being described. The feather placement is generally correct for the Native tribe being discussed/depicted.

**Poor:**

Native peoples are disrespected and there is a lack of understanding of the sophistication and complexity of their societies. The continuity of their societies is not represented. Values, religion, and morals are not connected to the present and are not depicted as taking people into the future. Religions are not discussed accurately. The dwellings depicted are mostly inaccurate to the tribe being described. The feather placement is incorrect for the Native tribe being discussed/depicted.

**Western focus on material**

**Questions to consider…**

- Is there an ethnocentric focus on material aspects of life. Native peoples are always described as coexisting**

**Excellent:**

The author shows a complete understanding of the Native relationship with material and non-material aspects of life. Native peoples are for the most part described as coexisting with nature.

**Good:**

The author shows a general understanding of the Native relationship with material and non-material aspects of life. Native peoples are for the most part described as coexisting.

**Poor:**

The author shows a lack of understanding of the Native relationship with material and non-material aspects of life. Native peoples are negatively described as being “relentlessly ecological.”
objects, such as baskets, poetry, and rugs?
• Are these objects portrayed as only useful for European trade?
• Are Native peoples shown as “relentlessly ecological” or spiritually coexisting with nature?

Look at Dialogue:

A question to consider…

• Do the Native peoples speak in broken English or in oratorical style like a “noble savage”?

Excellent: The Native peoples use language with the consummate and articulate skill of those who come from oral tradition.

Good: The Native peoples use language with developing and general skill of those who come from oral tradition.

Poor: The Native peoples use language imperfectly without any articulated skill.

Look at Standards for Success:

Questions to consider…

• In modern times, are Native peoples portrayed as childlike and helpless?

Excellent: Native adults are consistently portrayed as mature individuals who work hard and make sacrifices, in order to take care of their families and to take care of their people as a whole. Native communities and societies are seen as their own cultural norm. Native values are integral to the growth, development, and success of Native peoples.

Good: Native adults are generally portrayed as mature individuals who work hard and make sacrifices, in order to take care of their families and to take care of their people as a whole. Native communities and societies are generally seen as their own cultural norm. Native values and “white” values are necessary for the growth, development, and success of Native peoples.

Poor: Native adults are portrayed as dependents who rely on government assistance in order to take care of their families and to take care of their people as a whole. Native communities and societies are seen as abnormal from the white middle class “norm.” Native values are disregarded and “white” values are central to the growth, development, and success of Native peoples.

Look at the Role of Women:

A question to consider…

• Are women completely subservient to men?

Excellent: Women are consistently depicted as integral and respected participants of Native society.

Good: Women are generally depicted as integral and respected participants of Native society. At times, women are depicted as subservient to men.

Poor: Women are depicted as subservient to men or are not depicted in the text at all.

Look at the Role of Elders:

A question to consider…

• Are elders treated as a dispensable burden upon their people?

Excellent: Elders are consistently treated as loved and valued custodians of the People’s history, culture, and life ways. Elders are depicted as active members of the community who positively contribute to the well-being of society.

Good: Elders are generally treated as loved and valued custodians of the People’s history, culture, and life ways. Elders are sometimes depicted as inactive members of the community who make small contributions to the well-being of society.

Poor: Elders are treated as demanding, nagging, and irritating burdens who hinder the prosperity and well-being of society or are not depicted in the text at all.

Look for the Effects on a Child’s Self-Image:

Excellent: There is more than one positive role

Good: There is at least one positive role model

Poor: There are not any positive role models with
A question to consider…
• Is there anything in the story that would embarrass or hurt a Native child?

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Look at Author and Illustrator Backgrounds:
Questions to consider…
• Is there an ethnocentric bias that leads to distortions or omissions?
• Is the author/illustrator qualified to write about Native peoples?

| Excellent: The author and illustrator’s backgrounds qualify them to write about Native peoples. Their perspectives strengthen the work. | Good: The author or the illustrator’s background qualifies him/her to write about Native peoples. His or her perspective strengthens the work. | Poor: Neither the author nor the illustrator’s background qualifies them to write about Native peoples. Their perspectives weaken the work. |