



**HOLCOMBE INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING & LEARNING EXCELLENCE  
CLASSROOM RESEARCH AWARD EVALUATION**

*Human Resources – Holcombe Institute • 225 East Las Olas Boulevard • Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301 • 954-201-7339*

**Please complete this form for the research project that you conducted for the Classroom Research Award. This information will be reviewed in order to evaluate the effectiveness of your research. Your evaluation and supporting documentation will be posted on the HI Website. Use additional paper where necessary.**

**Note: Please submit this form and supporting documentation within 30 days of the completion of your project to Office of Professional Development & Training, B31 - R605, WHC. In addition, you will need to attach an electronic copy of the application to an email and forward to [ProfDevTrng@broward.edu](mailto:ProfDevTrng@broward.edu).**

**MUST BE TYPED**

Name:	<b>Lynne B. Thorner</b>	Date:	<b>17 December 2007</b>
Signature: Lynne B Thorner			
Title of Research Project:	<b>Accent the Positive: Linking Course Content with Linguistic and Cultural Diversity</b>		
Project Completion Date:	<b>December 2007</b>		

**1. State the problem/idea you researched/examined.**

My general inquiry proposed combining culturally diverse instructional materials and specific self-assessment methods in hopes of increasing second-language student success. My specific intention was to construct assignments that would purposefully connect writing assignments, collaborative activities, evaluations and assessments to discover whether second-language learners would achieve higher performance and participation levels in an ENC 1102 course.

Through a creative use of print and visual texts, I incorporated an idea that expanding instructional practices works not only with highly motivated students, but also engage those with language barriers, learning disabilities, or different ways of processing information. I continually explore how using film in the classroom – this time in the linguistically diverse classroom – could address issues that arise when teaching multi-lingual writers in a literature and composition course.

Additionally, I examined the connection between students' attendance and their participation in individual assignments and collaborative projects. And I experimented with providing native, bilingual and second-language students comfortable ways to link linguistic and cultural diversity with specific assignments and activities.

Essentially, I explored various teaching strategies that provoked enthusiastic participation among linguistically-diverse learners. First, we offered and welcomed literary selections from a variety of cultures. Throughout the term, we expanded assignments to include and address second-language student needs, experimenting with various collaborative strategies.

Finally, the end-of-term capstone presentation encouraged bilingual and second-language students to translate a ballad or poem into their native language, and then read it in that language to the entire student-audience, so that all students could better "hear" – and therefore more fully understand and appreciate – the linguistic complexities that comprise a culturally diverse ENC 1102 literature and composition course.

## 2. Provide a summary of the results of your research.

I have attempted to successfully use the opportunity provided by the Holcombe Institute for Classroom Research to document the instructional enhancement and quality of teaching and learning in a linguistically and culturally diverse ENC 1102 course.

I immersed the students in a semester of instructional techniques and thoughtful assignments especially designed to stimulate them to read and write, analyze and interpret, and appreciate what's on the page or the screen.

The success of my classroom research appears in the students' demonstration of sustained enthusiasm for homework assignments and classroom activities, and in their dedicated commitment to collaborative presentations and interactive forums. Ultimately, students even began to independently search for selections from their first language or native culture. I noticed students willingly share the selections they found with the Instructor and one another. This greatly enhanced the lessons.

Amazingly, attendance and grades remained high as the students' interest in the course deepened, quality of their written work improved and enthusiasm for in-class commentary increased. Over the term, students verbally expressed appreciation for the linguistic diversity within the class, and even demonstrated a growing interest in selections by culturally diverse authors, poets or filmmakers.

Positive results of my research proposal became manifest when students began taking a demonstrable role in classroom proceedings and participating more actively in the learning process. This reflects words spoken by Jim Colvert who said, "*The teacher who does not learn is not listening, while the student who does not teach is not being heard.*"

Across the semester, our vibrant learning community worked effectively to expand the "big picture." We addressed and concretized issues that grew out of the course assignment schedule that linked reading or viewing selections with the related Impressions Response writing assignments.

Clearly, my instructional style successfully resonated with the students, so that the goals for this Classroom Research project were achieved.

And if "*effective teaching is the art of arousing energy and assisting discovery,*" then surely my ideas for inviting, encouraging and celebrating students who wrote, read and translated selections into their native language ultimately enhanced this ENC 1102 course.

## 3. Please describe the methods you used to evaluate the effectiveness of your project. Include any quantitative and/or qualitative supporting data.

- Impressions Responses: students wrote short essays that combined a personal response with an analytical reaction to a particular literary or film selection.
- Collaborative Questionnaires: student-groups collaborated and answered an assigned question that "taught" their answer to the other students in a Socratic discussion-forum.
- Assessment Questionnaires: established the students' course expectations and academic achievements.
- Survey Responses: provided candid opinion-commentary regarding the students' evaluation of course selections.
- End-of-Term Panel Discussion: students had an opportunity to "wrap up the course" by sharing their evaluations and assessments of the course content and teaching style in a circle-discussion format.
- Student samples of assessments/assignments will be mailed under separate cover.

**4. If applicable, identify what prevented you from achieving maximum results.**

**The methods I used encouraged bi-lingual and second-language students to participate more enthusiastically in class activities and collaborative events. Also, attendance was boosted by this enhanced participation.**

**However, the college-level-grade evaluations of second-language student writing did not significantly improve. What did significantly improve was the overall enjoyment of students for the course, the supportive bonding of students with one another, and a heightened excitement for and participation in the course (in general) as demonstrated by both native speakers and second-language students.**

**5. Please attach copies of any evaluation forms (or a summary of those forms) that you used.**

**These will be sent under separate cover . . .after January 7<sup>th</sup> when I return to campus . . .**

**6. Specifically, how do you intend to share the results of your classroom research with the BCC community?**

- I am willing to network and share results of my project with colleagues and fellow professionals who share my enthusiasm for exploring media-enriched teaching techniques for linguistically diverse students.
- I would be pleased to co-facilitate a workshop or panel discussion and present my findings at a college-wide professional seminar.

**7. In what ways might faculty from other disciplines apply your research?**

- Humanities courses might benefit from an approach that explores ways to increase the participation and performance of second-language learners in our classes.
- Conversations with colleagues indicate a general willingness to expand current teaching practices that include an openness toward linguistic and cultural diversity.
- Exploring ideas about language and cultural diversity can lead to success for second-language students and greater understanding and appreciation for diversity among all our BCC students.

**8. List additional comments about your research that you wish to discuss with the HI or ideas for future follow-up studies in your discipline or other disciplines.**

Thomas Carlyle once remarked that, “*The block of granite which was an obstacle in the path of the weak becomes a stepping-stone in the path of the strong.*” Over the past 15 years teaching at North Campus, I remain inspired by students who literally and figuratively journey long distances and travel over many obstacles to reach the classrooms at Broward Community College. They encourage my teacher-journey and enhance my discovery of paths that lead to celebrating the cultural and linguistic diversity of our BCC students.

It is within a spirit of celebration that I submit my classroom research proposal evaluation.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne B. Thorner