

Pembroke Elementary Native American Read-In

Honors Project

In fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Esther G. Maynor Honors College

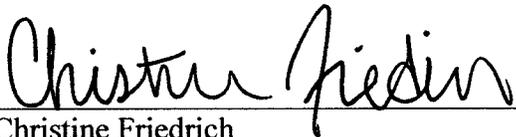
University of North Carolina at Pembroke

By

Christine Friedrich

Elementary Education

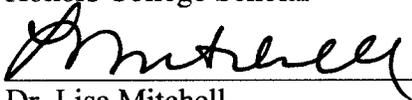
November 13, 2015



Christine Friedrich  
Honors College Scholar



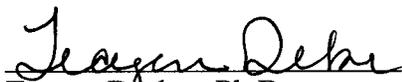
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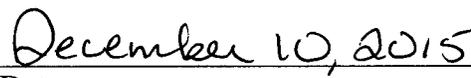
Dr. Lisa Mitchell  
Faculty Mentor



Date



Teagan Decker, Ph.D.  
Senior Project Coordinator



Date

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Lisa Mitchell for advising with this project, UNCP Library staff for helping with the book sorting and volunteering as readers on the day of the event, Dr. Mitchell and Dr. Betty Brown's education classes for volunteering to read, as well as Dr. Robert Canida for receiving the donated books that we were able to supply to the students at Pembroke Elementary School.

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## ABSTRACT

### PEMBROKE ELEMENTARY NATIVE AMERICAN READ-IN

by,  
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December 2016

For this senior project, I helped with organizing the Native American Heritage Read-In day at Pembroke Elementary School. Due to the large population of American Indian students at this local school, we had volunteers from the university come to the elementary school and read books relating to Native American culture to the students. We also had books to donate to every student in the elementary school. I had to sort these books and put them into grade-appropriate classroom sets for volunteers to bring with them to give to the students. Research has shown that students with access to literature at home have a higher success rate in school, and typically stay in school longer than those students who have less access to books. The purpose of this project was to promote literacy and multicultural understanding and literacy in the local community.

For my Senior Project, I coordinated with Elementary Education and Library faculty in order to help organize and plan the Native American Heritage Month Read-In day at Pembroke Elementary School on November 13, 2015. The process for this project involved meeting with the committee of UNCP faculty who were involved with this reading day, as well as organizing donated books in order to ensure that every student who was read to on the date of the read-in would go home with a few new books. The purpose of this community service project is to advocate not only literacy for the elementary students, but also encourage multicultural literature and an understanding of the Native American culture and background that most of the students in the school come from.

In the beginning of the project, I worked with Dr. Lisa Mitchell from the Elementary Education department to choose a date during Native American Heritage Month to host the read-in at Pembroke Elementary. We then met with a group of UNCP faculty from various departments, including Dr. Robert Canida, Ms. Anne Coleman, and Dr. Betty Brown. While meeting with these faculty members we were able to go over some details of the read in day such as times, groups we can find for volunteer readers, and what other things needed to be done to make the project a success. Below is a picture of the UNCP faculty that comprised of this committee, taken by Michael Alweine from UNCP's library staff.



Dr. Canida had spoken with a company called World Wide Book Drive and received a donation for a gaylord of children's books. There were thousands of books shipped to the university in a very large cardboard box, and were varied by level of books and type of literature. My major contribution for the Read-In day was to organize these books by grade level, and into classroom sets so that we could bring them to the elementary school and donate them to the students. With the help of library staff, I was able to first organize all the books into grade levels, Pre- K-5<sup>th</sup> grade. We then had to figure out how many books we had total per grade level, and how many we would be able to give every student. I had to use the list of teachers and how many students were in every class to bag up the books. We ended up being able to give every child in Pre-K to third grade four books each, and students in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade received two books each. I had the books organized into class sets, with labels on the bag indicating which bags went to which classroom. This process took several days to complete, along with the help of many volunteers. On the day of the Read-In, these books were brought to the school, and the volunteer readers took the bags with them to their respective classrooms to give to the students. Below is a picture of me with books bagged up with the label with the teacher name and classroom.



(Picture taken by Lisa Mitchell from UNCP's Elementary Education Department)

Sending home books with the students to add to their own personal collection was important, as having access to books at home has been proven to help improve younger students' reading success. A study from the University of Nevada found that "access to a wide range of books in the home can significantly boost children's chances of remaining in education as they grow up." Considering the low socio-economic level that most students in Pembroke Elementary School come from many of them most likely do not have a very big library at home, which limits their exposure to literature. By sending books home with these students, we were able to put a positive light on the impact that literature and reading can have on these students' futures in education. This research study done by Mariah Evans from the University of Nevada gave these findings about students who have a number of books readily available to them in the home succeeding later in life, and stay in school longer than their peers who do not have as much access to literature. Evans' study also concluded that "children of lesser-educated parents benefit the most from having books in the home" (Evans) The conclusion of this study maintains the

idea that being able to donate books to students in lower income families is the cheapest and easiest way to help improve these students' progress throughout their school years.

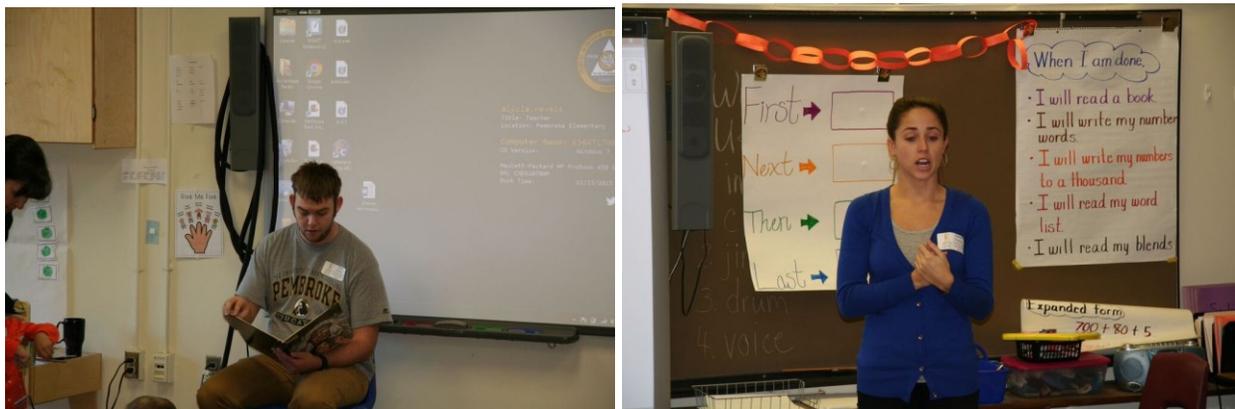
The other main pre-planning part of the Read-In was finding volunteers to read to every single class in the school. Between Dr. Mitchell and Dr. Brown's students from class, various library staff, and volunteers from UNCP Serve and Dr. Canida's office there were enough volunteers for all the classrooms to be read to. As a student in Dr. Brown's class, I was also expected to make mini-lessons to go along with picture books about Native American culture and teach them to one of the upper grade levels, and one of the lower grade levels. I volunteered to read to a fifth grade and a second grade class. Dr. Mitchell's class also had to come prepared to teach a mini-lesson dealing with a book on Native American culture.



(Volunteer readers, along with University and library staff. Picture taken by Dr. Lisa Mitchell from UNCP's Elementary Education Department.)

The actual day of the Read-In ended up being a success. Most volunteers showed up prepared with their cultural children's books to read to their classes, were ready to bring books to the classrooms with them to give to the students, and seemed excited about it. There were a few volunteers who did not show up, but there were other readers who were willing to volunteer to cover for those extra classrooms so that every student would have the opportunity to be read to.

The staff at Pembroke Elementary were very receptive to having faculty and students from the university at their school for those few hours, and the students from Pembroke Elementary seemed to be excited to have visitors in their school teaching them some more about Native American culture and history. From my experience in the classrooms I volunteered in, these students were attentive and seemed to be ready to learn and to participate. They were also excited to learn that they would be able to take books home with them at the end of the day.



(Volunteer Readers from the university reading and teaching mini-lessons on the day of the event. Picture taken by Mr. Michael Alewine from UNCP's library staff.)

As an elementary education major with a concentration in reading, I am passionate about ensuring children's literacy. This project was a great way to advocate literacy by reading to students as well as sending them home with new books to read. I feel like it is important to immerse children in as much and as diverse literature as possible, and this project was a great way to do that in a very large school.

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