SENIOR HONORS THESIS/CREATIVE PROJECT
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Name: Emily J. Bauer  Student ID #: 000 08 2241
Address: 855 Patterson Rd. Versailles KY  Phone #: 419-790-8437
E-mail address: ejbauer@bosu.edu  Graduation Term: Spring 2014
Major(s): Elementary Education
Project Advisor: Eva Zygmunt
Title of Honors Project: Life on a Military Base

Is your thesis to fulfill departmental honors requirements only? Yes  No

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  -black three-ring notebook or pressboard cover
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☒ Title page in place and in correct format
☒ Abstract in place
☒ Acknowledgements in place
  -"Acknowledgements" spelled correctly
☒ Author's statement/project rationale in place
☐ Pages numbered (if possible)
☐ IRB documents in place (if required)
☒ "Works Cited" in place
☒ Project written in good English and the information is accurate
☒ Permission to Send to Bracken Library form filled out and signed
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Student's Signature: Emily J. Bauer  Date: 23 April 2014

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Life on a Military Base

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

Emily Bauer

Thesis Advisor
Eva M. Zygmunt

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

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Abstract

“When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the
images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about
how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part. Our classrooms need to be
places where all the children from all the cultures that make up the salad bowl of American
society can find their mirrors.” (Bishop) After reading Bishop’s article I was inspired to
create a book that would be relevant to children of the United States Military.

There can always be more literature in the classroom and while there is children’s
literature relating to the military, there can be more. The more literature the more likely
children will find themselves in books. These books help to strengthen a support system.

In an article about helping children deal with deployment, Allen suggests to read children’s
books that depict military families. “Developing close ties to family and community creates
a solid sense of security that helps lead to strong values and prevents alternative
destructive paths to love and attention” By creating a support through multiple aspects,
including literature, resilience can be built in young children. “One of the cardinal findings
of resilience research is that those who lacked strong family support systems growing up
sought and received help from others—a teacher, a neighbor, the parents of peers or,
eventually, a spouse. They were not afraid to talk about the hard times they were having to
someone who cared for their well-being.”(Marano) My goal as a teacher is to build up
resilient students and to support them and help them grow in whatever way I can. By
acknowledging life as it is on a military base through literature and providing that
literature in my classroom, resilience can be built.
"Resilient people don't walk between the raindrops; they have scars to show for their experience. They struggle—but keep functioning anyway." (Marano). I want my students and children everywhere to see that they have a place in this world, to acknowledge where they have been and where they can go.

The following is a children's book that is relevant particularly to young children who serve with the military and live on base. The book, "Life on a Military Base" depicts multiple aspects of living on a base. The following includes a description of the plan, process and outcome of creating the book as well as a pdf of the book which is available through Amazon publishing.

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank first and foremost the military community at Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany. Thank you in particular to the students, families and faculty at Ramstein Elementary who welcomed me and supported me during my time as a student teacher.

I would also like to thank Dr. Eva Zygmunt for her enthusiastic spirit, encouragement and support of all my endeavors. Thank you also to Dr. Susan Tancock, who helped inspire in me the need for culturally relevant literature in the classroom.

**Author's Statement**

The inspiration for this thesis project came from a unique opportunity presented to me in the fall of my senior year at Ball State University. I participated in an educational semester
that immersed students in the Whitely Community within the city of Muncie. What struck a chord in me during that semester was the importance of culturally relevant literature: literature in which students can see themselves and connect to characters in stories. Many have said that books can take you places you have never been, and how true this is! I would add that books not only take you places but also act as a mirror, in which one can see his or her self.

It is just as important for individuals to know that they are represented, correctly, in literature, which reaches the hands of those who may never know them. Literature that represents an individual or a culture accurately is affirming to that individual or culture and gives recognition that here is something, someone worth talking about.

In an elementary classroom where students are learning who they are and how to walk in someone else's shoes, literature is particularly vital to proper development of self-concept and world-concept. Through culturally relevant literature, we affirm who our students are.

By having books in the classroom that represent at least some aspect of each individual the student receives the message that I am known, I am recognized for who I am, and who I am is good and acceptable!

When regarding my thesis and what was to be done, I felt very strongly that my thesis should be a creation that not only benefits me many others. This thesis is a children's book that was written for children and families serving in the United States Military. I had been
inspired to create culturally relevant literature for a unique set of children and this would become my thesis.

As I prepared to leave for Germany to begin my student teaching, all I knew about my thesis was that I desired to write a children's book that would relate to the children living on a military base. I was placed in a first grade classroom at the elementary school and looked forward in anticipation to arriving at the base. My plan was basically to go and get to know the children by building relationships and go from there. After all, I believe that it would be impossible to write a book that is relevant to an audience that one does not even know.

Throughout the semester, I was particularly aware of the community of Ramstein Elementary. I came in to my student teaching with the goal of getting to know my students and getting to know the community of Ramstein Air Force Base. With my strong foundation from the previous semester, I was excited to build relationships with my students, their families and other members of the community.

The creation of this children's book has been an endeavor that has helped me be a reflective teacher and mentor for my students. Because I knew that I wanted to create this book I was particularly aware and desirous all semester to find what it is that makes this place home for my students. I wanted to see the base and see life overseas through their eyes. I asked myself consistently what could I possibly write that would speak most to my students.
I found myself feeling inadequate and unworthy even attempting to write something that would relate to these children. I am after all, not a military child in the least and what I know about the military I have learned mainly from my four months student teaching at Ramstein. I asked myself, “What can I possibly say that would touch these children and do I even have the right to say it?” This was a question that I grappled with for a long time.

As I adjusted to life on base I began to realize that although I will never be able to speak from a military child’s perspective, I can speak from the perspective of an individual who is experiencing the base for the first time and trying to find her place. This is the approach I decided to take in writing this book.

The outcome of this approach has reached far beyond what I could ever have anticipated. I am beyond words in describing the impact this community (children, parents, teachers, workers, service members) have had on me. The outcome of my thesis is far more than a children’s book. The outcome of this thesis is that I have found kindness, generosity, emotion and acceptance. I have found a home with the people who serve with the military. The outcome of this thesis is that I have been able to experience and relate in some small way to the children and families who move around to serve the United States. I now know what it is like to come to a completely new and unfamiliar place and to find that it can be fun, exciting, serious, scary, happy and most of all it can become home because of all of these things and because of the people.
It was in finding this nugget of commonality that I was able to write this children's book and accomplish my goals for writing the book. I can write about what I know and what I experience, but my goal in writing this book was for children in the military to be able to read and relate to the book. What started out as a project initially intended for all children who serve with the military, what became of the project was a book in which I see myself and my time on a military base and in which my students see themselves as well. I believe that if my students are able to see their life recognized in the pages of this book, many other children will be able to see a glimmer of themselves.

My intent with this thesis is to submit the book for publishing through Amazon Publishing. Once the book has been submitted, I will receive a copy to proof, okay and send back in. At that point, more copies will be printed and available for order by anyone on the web. A copy will be sent to Bracken Library at Ball State University in Muncie Indiana and available for check out. The book will be available for anyone to read! What I would like to do is order a copy of the book for each of my students to give as a gift. If my first graders and others throughout the world are able to receive this book, read it, and relate to all it says and all it shows then my goal has been accomplished.

Works Cited


DEDICATION

For children and families of the United States Military.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to my first grade students, their families, and the teachers and administrators at Ramstein Elementary School. Thank you for welcoming me into your lives and into the U.S. Military community in Ramstein, Germany. You live lives worthy of praise and recognition! For all you do: thank you, thank you, thank you!
Life on a Military Base

Emily Bauer
Life on a military base can be many things...
It is fun.
Like when I go to school and see our mascot!
It is exciting.
Like when our family gets to go to other countries!
It is serious.
Like when the national anthem plays and EVERYTHING stops.

People salute.
Respect is expected.

We say, "yes, Ma'am!" and, "yes, Sir!"
Life on a military base can be uncertain.
Like when Mom or Dad is deployed or TDY.
Sometimes life can be hard...
But a military base is full of nice people!
People who smile and play...
People who help us out...
People who love us and help make this place home!