Please read all instructions and regulations on the reverse side of this sheet prior to the completion of this form. The 8 copies of your proposal are due in the Dean’s Office on the 2nd Friday of the Block by 1:00 p.m. If you have questions, please contact Rita Zook at x6686 or email rzook@coloradocollege.edu.

DATE SUBMITTED: Feb 26th, 2010

NAME: [Redacted]
CLASS: [Redacted] WORNER BOX: [Redacted] EXT: [Redacted]

ID #: [Redacted]
HOMETOWN (Not Address): [Redacted]

NAME: [Redacted]
CLASS: [Redacted] WORNER BOX: [Redacted] EXT: [Redacted]

ID #: [Redacted]
HOMETOWN (Not Address): [Redacted]

STUDENT RESEARCH: Yes  LIFETIME: Yes  CONFERENCE: No

PROJECT TITLE: Approaches to Teaching: Eliminating Gender Differences in Special Needs Classrooms

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF INTENDED USE OF FUNDS: With these funds, I plan to observe and assist two hearing-impaired classrooms at Centro Nacional, a special needs institution in San José, Costa Rica. Proposed Date/Block of Use: March 10th - 24th, Spring Break.

NAME OF FACULTY SPONSOR: Martha Slayden

HAVE YOU BEEN THE RECIPIENT OF A PREVIOUS VENTURE GRANT: Yes □ No □

IF SO, WHAT AMOUNT? ______ WHEN? ______ REPORT SUBMITTED? ______

TOTAL AMOUNT OF VENTURE FUNDS NOW REQUESTED: $1,000

ARE YOU SEEKING OTHER FUNDING FOR THIS PROPOSAL: Yes □ No □

IF YES, WHAT IS THE SOURCE?

If this proposal is approved, I understand that it is my responsibility to notify the Dean’s Office immediately if I do not pursue my project as proposed to the Dean’s Advisory Committee. I further understand that all funds are to be used according to the proposal as submitted and approved by the Dean’s Advisory Committee. Any changes to an approved project must be submitted to the Chair of the Committee for approval. Please note: the IRS requires that we report Venture Funds as taxable income.

SIGNATURE DATE: 2/7/10
Venture Grant Application

Approaches to Teaching: Eliminating Gender Differences in Special Needs Classrooms

Research Question: How do teachers eliminate gender differences in a special needs classroom?

Classroom Case Study: At Centro Nacional de Educación Especial in Costa Rica, what approaches do teachers use to eliminate gender-biases to foster social inclusion in a special needs classroom, specifically for students with hearing impairments?

*(I will be comparing my research at Centro Nacional with my 7th block classroom case study at Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind)

Background Information:

Children learn about gender differences by age two. Although biological factors account for hormonal differences in males and females, the American society as a whole has constructed a social view on how different genders are supposed to act.

Learning about gender-roles play a major role in how a society functions. Piaget’s theory of Cognitive Development discusses how people learn to organize and create schemas about the world around them. If parents, society, and schools are instigating certain ideas about differences in sexes, then at an early age children learn to adapt into these predisposed roles. As a result, stereotypes and discrimination will negatively or positively affect a human’s self-concept and self-esteem; a low-self concept will relate to low expectations and therefore, low achievement for students.

These gender-biases transfer over to the classroom. Teachers face many different issues with gender differences in the classroom and gender inequities often foster an unfair treatment of students based on their identified sex. In order to eliminate gender differences, children’s environments need to foster ideas at an equal level for both males and females. Schools must modify lesson plans and facilitate positive school cultures in order to eliminate certain stereotypes about males and females and although society and family factors socialize children to a certain extent, it is the role of the school to create a safe and positive learning environment for all sexes.

Deaf Culture and Education:

1 Woolfolk
2 Woolfolk
3 Stake & Katz
Until the early 19th century, "there had been no systematic attempts to educate deaf in the US." According to survey of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) in 1996, "only one deaf child in five attends school in developing nations, although nine out of ten hearing children do." Within the K-12 classroom, students with hearing impairments face issues of community identity, institutionalized discrimination, and socialization differences, which can often create an alienation from the predominant hearing society. Although the educational system seems to face endless problems and complications, dealing with issues of funding, accountability, teacher pay and performance, student socializing, and ESL programs, the pressing issue of gender differences is a major debate of the 21st century in the classroom, workplace, and society at large.

Gender inequities often foster an unfair treatment of students based on their identified sex. Not only do textbooks overrepresent males in titles and illustrations but teachers have been known to create different expectations for males and females as well. Research has shown that from as early as pre-school to as late as college, teachers have more interactions and more negative interactions with males. This means that teachers are more likely to ask questions, give more feedback, and valuable comments to males, and although female students have more positive interactions with teachers, they receive fewer hours of attention and instruction. Therefore, it is not only the impact of societies and families that create gender differences but it is also the school system that is capable of fostering and perpetuating gender stereotypes within the classroom.

It is through this Venture Grant that I want to begin my research on what hearing-impaired classrooms do to eliminate these gender-biases. As an Education minor at Colorado College, I will be conducting further research during an Independent Study this 7th block in order to conduct a case study between Centro Nacional de Educación Especial and the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind to write my final synthesis paper. With this paper, I will be comparing the different methods and approaches that teachers use at each school in hearing-impaired classroom.

Methodology:

If given funding, I plan to travel to San José, Costa Rica to conduct interviews with administrators and teachers as well as observe gender dynamics in two different classrooms at Centro Nacional. Although I will not be interviewing children, the classroom assistance will give me a more interactive experience with the students. I want to explore how Centro Nacional, as a major institution in Costa Rica for special needs, addresses gender issues through qualitative research and data.

In order to maintain subjectivity in this research, I will be observing two different middle school classrooms and interviewing at least 20 different teachers of all grades. I will get interviews with at least 4 administrators, including the director, Zarelly Trejos. I will be conducting all my interviews in Spanish. During these oral interviews, I will be taking notes that will be stored on a personal computer. I have attached a list of IRB-

4 Walter Trattner
5 Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan
6 Stake & Katz
7 Woolfolk
approved interview questions that I will be asking both administrators and teachers. Participants will also be given a consent form to read and sign before the interview starts.

**Background/Preparation:**

I have spent a significant amount of time in various schools in Colorado Springs observing issues that administrators and teachers face to foster an inclusive school culture, however, I have never worked closely in a special needs classroom to see how or if these institutions establish or address a gender-inconsistent curriculum. If given funding for this Venture Grant, I will be much more prepared for my classroom work at Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind.

I have a strong background in classes in Education, Sign Language, and Spanish that are relevant to this topic such as:

- Global Perspectives in the K-12 Classroom
- Sociology of Education
- Contemporary Educational Issues
- Educational Psychology: The Science & Art of Teaching
- AN123 American Sign Language I
- Research Methods

I have also worked as a teacher aid in Colorado Springs schools such as:

- Taylor Elementary: Reading and Writing, 5th grade
- Mann Middle School: Social Studies, 6th grade
- North Middle School: Emotionally Disturbed Classroom, 6-8th grades

As I have already established a solid base of contacts at Centro Nacional, I plan to return for these interviews during Spring Break. As a Spanish major, my proficiency in the language will allow me to conduct all of the interviews in Spanish.

**Itinerary:**

Dates: March 10th-March 24th

Wednesday March 10th- Leave Colorado Springs for Denver
Thursday March 11- Early flight from Denver to San José
Friday March 12- Introduction with Zarelly Trejos and classroom observations at Centro- 4th grade
Saturday March 13- Tour of Instituto de Rehabilitación y Formación Helen Keller
Sunday March 14- Meet host family in Heredia
Monday March 15- Classroom observations at Centro- 4th grade
Tuesday March 16- Classroom assistance at Centro- 4th grade
Wednesday March 17- Classroom observations at Centro- 6th grade8
Thursday March 18- Classroom observations at Centro- 6th grade
Friday March 19- Classroom assistance at Centro- 6th grade
Saturday March 20- Tour of University of San José
Sunday March 21- Meet host family in Heredia
Monday March 22- Interviews with teachers
Tuesday March 23- Interviews with administrators (Debrief with Zarelly Trejos)

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8 In Costa Rica, 6th grade is the last year that students are required to attend school.
Wednesday March 24- Travel from San José to Denver

**Budget:**

Airfare (DIA to San José): $485  
Transportation (gas & public transportation): $70  
Food: $15/ day X 15 = $225  
Housing: $20/ night X 11: San José hostel 11 of 13 nights = $220 (the other nights I will stay with a host family from Centro Nacional)

Total: $1000

**Campus Presentation:**

In order to share my research with the Colorado College community, I plan on presenting my findings with the Education Department during a Taste of Education forum, which will be open to anyone on campus. In addition, I will be writing my synthesis paper during 7th block, which will be reviewed by my Education advisors, Kris Stanec, Paul Kuerbis, and Martha Slayden.

**List of Sources:**

- Educational Psychology: Active Learning Edition, Anita Woolfolk
- Teacher-Pupil Relationships in Elementary School Classroom: Teacher-Gender & Pupil-Gender Differences, Jayne E. Stake & Jonathan F. Katz
- The Federal Government and Social Welfare in the 19th Century, Walter Trattner
- The Hispanic Deaf, Gilbert K. Delgado
- A Journey into the Deaf World, Harlan Lane, Robert Hoffmeister, & Ben Bahan
- Multicultural Special Education, Festus E. Obiakor
- Fundamentals of Special Education, Richard A. Culatta & James Tompkins
- Teaching Children of Different Cultures in the Classroom, Arnold Cheyney
- Psychological Perspectives on Deafness, Marc Marschark & M. Diane Clark
- Oxford Handbook of Deaf Studies, Language, and Education, Marc Marshark & Patricia Elizabeth Spencer
- Racial Inequity in Special Education, Daniel Losen & Gary Orfield
- The Natural Approach, Stephen D. Krashen & Tracy D. Terrell

**List of Contacts:**

Zarely Sibaja Trejos (Director of Centro Nacional de Educación Especial Fernando Centeno Güell)  
Goicochea, Guadalupe, San José, Costa Rica  
elicam@racsa.co.cr

Rocio López Masis (Director of Instituto de Rehabilitación y Formación Helen Keller)  
La Y Griega San José  
lhkeller@racsa.co.cr
Interview Questions- IRB approved:

Questions to Administrators

1. How long have you been working for Centro Nacional?
2. What is your job title?
3. What does your job entail?
4. What led you to teach in a special needs school?
5. What is Centro Nacional’s biggest strength?
6. What is Centro Nacional’s greatest weakness?
7. What is the ratio of male to female students?
8. What is the ratio of male to female teachers?
9. Do you see any difference between the students in terms of their gender?
10. Do you separate students by gender? Where?
11. Do teachers discuss gender differences in their students?
12. What does Centro Nacional do to create an inclusive environment for male and female students?

Questions to Teachers

1. How long have you been working for Centro Nacional?
2. What is your job title?
3. What does your job entail?
4. What subjects do you teach?
5. What led you to teach in a special needs school?
6. What is Centro Nacional’s biggest strength?
7. What is Centro Nacional’s greatest weakness?
8. Do you see any difference between the students in terms of their gender?
9. Do you see any difference between the teachers in terms of gender?
10. Do you separate students by gender? Where?
11. Do you discuss gender differences in their students?
12. What does Centro Nacional do to create an inclusive environment for male and female students?