



WHAT I WORE

Nancy A. Oliver, Northern Arizona Univ., Flagstaff, AZ 86011

Objective: The purpose of this study was for students to remember different types of clothing during their life and connect the occasion, clothing, and the feelings associated with self-presentation.

Project Description: In the book *Love, Loss, and What I Wore*, Ilene Beckerman presents an account of events in her life and the clothing she wore during those occasions. The students were shown the book by Ilene Beckerman and assigned the writing of a mini book about their clothing memories.

Results: Students turned in mini books created from notebooks, construction paper, poster board, etc. Book titles included *Lifetime of Memories*, *Clothed Memories of My Life*, *My Clothes, My Memories*, *According to Her Closet*, *The Brief History With Clothes On*, *Moments and Dress*, *In the Corner of My Closet*, *Ode to a Poncho* and *Weaving Rain-bows Out of Corn-flakes*. Students opted to sketch clothing images, create paper dolls, and use photographs for the visual component of the assignment with the commentary varying from a few short sentences, to page long descriptions, to rhymes. Consistently students commented on the importance of clothing as a passage to "fit in" and the embarrassment created when clothing was contradictory with friends. Even as children, clothing could produce a transformation or as one student stated, clothing helped to "embrace the character." Students connected clothing with happy events and sad events such as a death or clothing worn the day their parents separated. One student discussed clothing as a "prefabricated identity" used to communicate a particular self.