*When Sesame Street explored the new medium of educational television, its creators encountered support and opposition as they brought early childhood learning and diversity awareness to families of all economic levels, helped close achievement gaps, and inspired a valuable legacy of high quality children’s television worldwide*. Although I have few vivid memories of early childhood, I distinctly recall learning letters with Big Bird, reciting numbers with The Count, and discovering the rules of friendship with Grover, Oscar, and the whole *Sesame Street* gang. At some point, I outgrew the show but was still secretly excited for opportunities to watch a few episodes with my younger siblings. Recently I saw a short documentary about how *Sesame Street* was a ground-breaking educational television show. I was intrigued. When NHD came around, I knew that *Sesame Street* was the perfect topic for me.

Once I chose my topic, I gathered research at the school, local, and University of Wisconsin-La Crosse libraries. I found books, magazines, videos, and newspaper articles. I used the Internet to add interesting primary and secondary sources. Some of my best sources were interviews with cast members and muppeteers that I found in the Archive for American Television. The interviews covered a wide range of topics that helped me to better understand the diversity, challenges, and educational goals from the perspectives of those who were most closely related to the show.

During my research, I was reminded that the characters of *Sesame Street* are recognized and loved around the world and would create an immediate connection between my project and my audience. For that reason, it seemed like an exhibit was the best category choice for me. To draw people’s attention, I selected and enlarged a great image of the whole *Sesame Street* gang and created a 6-foot-tall lamppost with the familiar *Sesame Street* sign. I used primary color matting to highlight quotes and text of extra importance and designed a small sidewalk to help my audience follow my organization.

*Sesame Street* made its 1969 debut at a time when our nation was experiencing civil rights unrest and growing educational gaps at the kindergarten level. Although a majority of families had a television set in their homes, educational television for children was nonexistent. The Sesame Street developers exchanged innovative educational ideas as they explored the newly popular television medium and created opportunities for young children from all socioeconomic levels to encounter not only early educational concepts, but also the diversity of our nation’s population. Other programs followed *Sesame Street* when research revealed the significant impact of these encounters on the knowledge of children entering school. However, not all encounters were positive. Producers encountered resistance to their “no commercials” policy, their inclusion of a culturally diverse cast, and their desire to address topics that were considered controversial for young audiences. *Sesame Street* inspires the continued exploration and growth of high quality educational programming and motivates millions of children around the world to love learning.