UTILIZING MULTICULTURAL CHILDREN’S LITERATURE TO INCREASE CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

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A Project

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Abstract

of

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The purpose of this project is to bring multiculturalism into the classroom to help students create a better understanding of other cultures as well as their own. Multicultural education is especially needed today as schools are becoming more diverse. The literature reviewed reinforces why multicultural education is needed (with a look at bilingual education), ways multicultural education can benefit the student, and barriers and benefits teachers will find with multicultural education. The review of literature also emphasizes how multicultural literature can help students meet that objective of understanding culture. Multicultural literature can increase students’ sensitivity to those from differing cultures and let them view other cultural perspectives. They also help students identify with their own culture, introduce them to other cultures, and provide a safe way to open conversation about diversity (Colby & Lyon, 2004).

Simply exposing children to multicultural literature is not enough to help them learn about and appreciate other cultures; thus the handbook was created. The
handbook includes supplementary lessons that utilize multicultural literature to address multiculturalism. The books selected for the lessons were chosen by looking at a variety of sources. The lessons in the handbook are categorized by themes that serve as a way to unify cultures. The handbook also provides guidelines that can be used to help determine what books to choose, or teachers can instead refer to the bibliography that was compiled for other multicultural children’s books that teachers can utilize in their classroom.

____________________, Committee Chair
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Researcher

While working in the education field, I have encountered many different cultures. It is invaluable for me as a teacher to learn about students’ cultures in order to gain a broader understanding about their backgrounds. My first teaching experience centered on culture was teaching students about Lunar New Year. Many students had limited knowledge about the holiday. I corrected the misconception that “Gung Hay Fat Choy” translates into “Happy New Year” in Chinese. It actually means “Congratulations and Prosperity.” It was a lesson that I enjoyed, especially as they enjoyed it as well. In a credential class my cohort also set up a Multicultural Day at the public library in West Sacramento. We invited students to come while we shared information on four cultures: Russian, Mexican, Hmong, and Indian. These cultures are prevalent in the schools where we worked in the Washington Unified School District. Though students attend school every day with classmates of other cultures, they know little about those cultures.

While working in schools now, I am constantly asked by students about my own ethnicity. It is often one of the first things they want to know about me. Just like students, most people wonder about the ethnicities that others may have. They then make assumptions about a person after that. Teachers can help students change those assumptions and help them learn more about other cultures, which will help create a respectful classroom environment. This knowledge about other cultures will be
beneficial to them beyond the classroom because they will encounter many different kinds of people outside of school. The purpose of this project is to create a handbook in which I address cultural diversity beyond the surface level. I intend to show culture’s intrinsic significance by providing a framework for teachers to help students learn about it.

**Purpose**

The United States is a diverse nation, especially in California where minority groups are continuing to grow. Students will benefit from learning about other cultures, because it helps prepare them for a culturally diverse society and associate with many kinds of people. During this project, I created a handbook to give primary grade teachers the opportunity to use children’s literature to introduce students to various aspects of particular cultures. Its main audience is primary teachers because it is important to teach students early on how to appreciate, value, and respect other cultures. Teachers would use the handbook by implementing lessons that are aligned with the literature the students would be introduced to. Literature is a great way to introduce students to culture because of the numerous books out there that give readers opportunities to learn about different cultures. Teachers would also learn how to choose quality literature and bring it into their classrooms.

**Statement of the Problem**

In many different ways, schools can choose to either empower or hinder their students. They can help with the former through multicultural education. Many schools do little to acknowledge the diversity of their students, except perhaps when
focusing on heroes (Martin Luther King Jr.) or holidays (Lunar New Year, St. Patrick’s Day). Lessons such as those tend to consist of an art lesson, which is superficial and the easiest to integrate. They do not add much to a student’s understanding of other cultures. The lessons lead to student’s cultures being seen as particularly significant one day a year only. Although the lessons are a good start, it is not enough for students to really appreciate other cultures.

The handbook for the curriculum project aims to promote further learning of cultural diversity by implementing the use of supplemental lessons throughout the year. Sufficient time would be set aside on a weekly basis. Focusing on a different theme among cultures every month instead of limiting a culture to being celebrated on certain days would provide more extensive coverage and would be more beneficial for students. It would instill in them the significance of culture, which plays a big role in our everyday lives. The themes involved are self identity/family, folktales and fairytales, cultural traditions, injustice, and friendship. Multicultural literature would be used as a way to support the themes and introduce students to cultures, with the use of lessons that focus on important cultural aspects in order to engage student learning.

**Significance**

This project is significant in a number of ways. Historically and even now (to a lesser extent), schools have adopted an assimilation ideology. Students had to strip themselves from their cultural identity in order to succeed in school. The rationale was for students to fit into the cultural norm – one size fits all. This attitude alienated the minority students, especially because they found that what they learned in school held
no significance to them nor did it produce any personal meaning. Multicultural education is a way to curb the problem by acknowledging students’ cultures in the classroom and being more accommodating to their needs. Students would feel more valued and empowered when they could easily make connections to what they are learning. Learning would thus become more engaging to them. Even so, multicultural education is not widely taught (with the exception of heroes and holidays). The handbook is a way in which students could make cultural diversity meaningful in the classroom and learn more about other cultures.

**Methods**

The project will focus on the importance of students learning about other cultures. How multicultural education has been taught in the past and present will be reviewed to support the need for the project. Research will provide the framework supporting the rationale that using multicultural literature to teach students about cultures is effective. The handbook provides guidelines so the reader can learn how to analyze and evaluate quality multicultural children’s literature. A bibliography is provided to help teachers utilize further quality books in their classroom.

Elementary school teachers in the primary grades are the intended recipients of the proposed handbook. Time would be set aside during class for students to engage in the lessons of the theme/culture(s) studied and they would be given the opportunity to discuss the book(s) with the rest of the class. The teacher would provide questions for the students to focus on during discussion. Students would do activities based on particular aspects of the culture being studied. Resource guides for multicultural
children’s literature were consulted in choosing the books and they were also evaluated based on their authenticity in depicting the cultures. All of the books selected for the handbook are available from the Sacramento Public Library.

Multicultural children’s books were the chosen method in helping students develop further cultural understanding because there is a plethora of book titles that can be utilized well in the classroom. They can help students to identify with their own culture, introduce them to other cultures, and safely open conversation about diversity (Colby & Lyon, 2004). Students are given an opportunity to view other cultural perspectives. Such books also increase students’ sensitivity to those who are from different cultures.

**Limitations**

Although many cultures exist, the handbook will not cover all cultures. The focal cultures selected for this handbook represent a cluster of the dominant ethnicities in the U.S. Another limitation is the length of a school year, which would not be sufficient to cover exhaustively all cultures, so students would have a limited amount of time in covering the seven cultures presented: African American, Latino American, Asian American, Native American, Middle Eastern American, European American, and Jewish American. The cultures presented are broad, encompassing many cultures within themselves. For example there are many types of Asians – i.e. Chinese, Vietnamese, Hmong. Not all aspects of a culture would be explored either. Another limitation is that the handbook is mainly designed for primary grade teachers.
Although other teachers can use it, they will have to modify the lessons in the handbook to match it to their grade level.

**Definition of Terms**

**Multicultural education**: Its purpose in this project is to educate students and promote their interests, understanding, and appreciation about other cultures. It is used as a means to address the changing population of students in classrooms.

**Multicultural literature**: literature that has minority main characters and presents the reader with information on certain aspects of minorities’ cultures.

**Culture**: a broad term used to define people who identify themselves as belonging to a particular group, mainly by race.

**Assimilation**: when students are expected to shed their culture in order to fit into society and succeed in school.

**Organization of Project**

Chapter One is an overview of the project. It includes the purpose, significance, methods, limitations, terms, and organization. Chapter Two includes a review of literature on multicultural education with a focus on bilingual education, ways multicultural education can benefit the student, barriers teachers may face, and the benefits they will find with multicultural education. Chapter Two also discusses the benefits of multicultural literature, as well as how it can be utilized. Chapter Three discusses the strategies and process in developing the project. Chapter Four is comprised of a summary of the project, recommendations, limitations, and final conclusions. Additionally, a handbook is provided in the Appendix. The handbook
focuses on five common themes among the cultures. Each section contains lessons that are literature based. The lessons’ aims are to give students further knowledge on African American, Latino American, Asian American, Native American, Middle Eastern American, European American, and Jewish American cultures. The Appendix will also provide a list of other books that can be used to teach students about other cultures.

**Summary**

In the first chapter, background of the project is provided to explain why it is important for teachers to have their students learn about other cultures. In the next chapter, literature that supports the purpose of the project will be reviewed.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

When envisioning an ideal school environment, most would agree upon a few factors. Students enjoy going to school. They feel welcome and safe. Students get along with each other and respect everyone. Teachers take interest in their students’ lives and care for them. One way to help achieve such a school setting is through multicultural education, especially since race and ethnicity are largely emphasized in schools today.

In this chapter the significance of multicultural education will be examined through four major areas of focus. These four sections are carefully chosen to help the reader understand the need for multicultural education. Multicultural education is beneficial for everyone, students and teachers alike. It helps teachers to better serve their students. An effective way to bring multiculturalism into the classroom is with multicultural books. There are many book titles that are entertaining and simultaneously educational for students in helping them learn more about other cultures.

In the first section bilingual education is reviewed. Bilingual education is a part of multicultural education and just like multicultural education it has been disregarded and seen as unnecessary. But both are needed in order to help students become more successful in the classroom and beyond. The second section discusses
the value of multicultural education to the student. Students’ cultural and historical background is discussed to help create better understanding. The third section discusses the value that multicultural education has to teachers as well. It also discusses how teachers are not prepared to teach diverse groups. Thus, the handbook was created for this project. The last section will discuss why it is important to have multicultural literature present in the classroom – the numerous benefits of using multicultural literature.

**Views and Perspectives on Bilingual Education as it Relates to Multicultural Education**

Policies in several states that regulate classrooms to instruct using English-only can be viewed as disregarding students who are minorities and implying that using languages other than English is a problem. In California, the passage of Proposition 227 in 1998 restricted bilingual education by mandating public schools to teach in English. Children who were not yet fluent in English are given intensive sheltered English immersion for no more than a year (Linton, 2007). Salazar (2008) stated, educators may think that limiting students to speak English only helps them attain the “language of power” (p. 344) but from a Freire(n) viewpoint it oppresses minorities. Such policies are remarkably problematic when “minorities” are continuing to grow in population and will soon actually become the majority in the United States. The policies can leave students and parents feeling that schools are hostile environments where they are forced to assimilate in order to succeed, particularly when language and culture are often pointed to as reasons for students’ academic difficulties. Ideally,
instead of fixing the child to assimilate into the school system, the school system would necessarily be fixed in order to accommodate all students and make it more possible for them to succeed.

It is not feasible for teachers to instruct all minority students in their home language, but when they can they should not be restricted from doing so. Critics may say that it will not be fair if bilingual services would only be provided for some English learners, but if there is a significant number of a particular group (such as Latinos, the largest minority group) then services should be made available to address their learning needs.

Several studies indicate better alternatives to current English Only methods. In one such study, Transitional Bilingual Education was utilized, in which a group of Spanish-speaking preschoolers were assigned to a Head Start classroom where instruction was in Spanish (Duran, Roseth, & Hoffman, 2010). The study indicates that students who received Spanish language instruction were likely “to improve Spanish oral vocabulary development and early letter–word identification skills at no apparent cost to English language and literacy development” (p. 216). Prior findings indicate that the outcome strongly predicts for later reading attainment in English for the Spanish speaking students due to their ability to transfer their skills from Spanish to English. Therefore, their first language was not a hindrance but instead support for the students in learning English. When children are able to speak another language, it should be viewed as an advantage rather than a disadvantage.
Another relevant study supported the cross-linguistic approach (Horst, White & Bell, 2010). In the study the researchers examined how language instruction can be designed to help learners attain a new language by referencing their first language knowledge. This is supported by language learners consistently making connections between their first language to the second language they are learning, even when teachers do not acknowledge their first language. The study exemplifies why it is beneficial to teach English learners by building on their first language and making connections between the two, rather than immersing them in English-only and overlooking their first language.

Even though California passed Proposition 227, the state realizes the need for teachers who can work effectively with diverse student populations. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) authorizes teachers to work with English learners after obtaining an English Language (EL) Authorization or the Cross-cultural, Language, and Academic Development (CLAD) certification when they meet the qualifications to serve the needs of English learners (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2010).

**The Value of Multicultural Education to the Student**

For some students, schools are where they first get to know people of differing cultural groups. It is also a place where it may not be uncommon for them to hear offhand racial comments being made or hear race being used as an insult. Students can become ashamed of who they are as a result. Learning to interact positively with everyone is important. Thus, it is necessary for teachers to give students the
opportunity to learn about other cultures in order to promote understanding among different cultures while also exploring their own cultures.

Some children show great levels of prejudice towards those who are different from them (Chakraborty & Stone, 2008). Prejudice is partly contributed by student’s unfamiliarity with others – fear of the unknown. Students’ prejudices may come from many sources including the school environment. As students grow older their prejudices may solidify, making it harder to change their ways of thinking. Paulo Freire, an educator and theorist, stated, “Prejudices are in part based on an intolerance of differences” (Leistyna, 2004, p. 7). With multicultural education, students learning about other cultures would achieve further understanding by being exposed to the unknown and encouraged to be accepting of individual differences.

Multicultural education helps students feel valued in the classroom and fosters student self-esteem because it teaches them to respect their own and other cultures. Self-esteem is essential because it leads to higher motivation in doing well in the classroom. Students also feel motivated when teachers are aware and respectful of cultural diversity in their classroom (Ginsberg, 2005). Lessons designed to “help elicit students’ stories, opinions, values, and interests” (p. 3) will encourage motivation. Students will become more motivated when they can make a connection between themselves and what they are learning.

Teachers must consider several factors to elevate student motivation, including establishing inclusion, developing a positive attitude, engendering competence, and enhancing meaning (Ginsberg, 2005). Inclusion results from creating a learning
environment in which teachers and students respect and connect to each other. When students’ lives are represented in the classroom it further establishes inclusion. Students develop positive attitudes when their voices are heard and when they can make decisions in their learning. Learning will better relate to their experiences and interests. Teachers can help engender competence in students by helping them to be successful in what they value and identifying what they know and can do. Meaning is enhanced through challenging and engaging learning, with students actively participating. Teachers develop upon what students know. Each of the listed factors applies to multicultural education.

Many ethnic minorities find that what they learn in school has no significance to them because it doesn’t reflect who they are. They have a sense of alienation. With multicultural education, learning would be more interesting to those students because it would produce personal meaning for them (Gay, 2003). True learning can only happen when students are engaged in relevant experiences. It is better implemented when students bring their background knowledge and real life experiences into the classroom, Paulo Freire believed. Connections would be made between their school and outside lives when the students bring in their lived knowledge, which would make learning more meaningful for them.

All students have experiences that they can share and it is important that teachers give them opportunities in the classroom to be heard and respected. It will enable students to see that they are valued in the classroom and that they all have something to contribute. Multicultural education would allow students to become the
teachers and the teachers to become the students, a Freiren concept. Students can become givers of information by sharing aspects about their culture that the teacher or other classmates may not know. In other words, teachers need to understand that they do not know everything about other cultures – they are continuously learning like their students are. Everyone is a learner and a teacher.

All students have a culture. It is helpful to learn students’ cultural and historical backgrounds in order to create better understanding. It is also important to remember that the term “culture” is used broadly and that each culture is ethnically diverse within itself.

**African American Culture**

African Americans are now the second largest minority group. They make up 12.9% of the population in the United States and 6.6% of the population in California (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). While most minorities came to the United States willingly, the first African Americans were forcibly taken to the country as slaves. African Americans have their own language, a variation of English. Many in society do not recognize it as an appropriate form of communication. When they speak African American English instead of standard English, students may be labeled as unintelligent (Williams, 2006). It is important to reaffirm all students’ use of language as significant.

African Americans have been the central focus when it comes to segregation in schools ever since Brown vs. Board of Education, when the Supreme Court ruled that separate schools for blacks and whites were unconstitutional. Even with
desegregation, there are large gaps in student achievement between blacks and their white peers. Reasons in part are biased curriculums and predominately white teaching staff. Traditional schooling leaves them feeling isolated (Smith, 2002).

Latino (Hispanic) American Culture

Latinos refer to people who originated from Latin American countries, including Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Latinos are currently the largest minority group in the United States. As of 2009, they make up 15.8% of the total population in the United States and 37% of the population in California. Latino households are larger compared to other groups. Issues of immigration status and English proficiency often affect families since many are foreign born. In California one out of two Latino children has an immigrant parent (de Haymes & Kilty, 2007).

More than 50% of Latino students do not graduate high school (Rodriguez, 2008). They are also more likely to attend large urban high schools. Policymakers and educators continually identify their language and culture as disadvantages and as reasons for low academic achievement. Around the 1920’s Mexican students were given an IQ test in English to evaluate their academic progress. Test results led the students to be considered “culturally deprived” and “educable mentally retarded” (Rolon, 2005, p. 15). Students had to attend segregated schools where they received remedial education with English-only instruction. Speaking Spanish in school resulted in corporal punishment (Rolon, 2005). Puerto Rican and Mexican American communities have long wanted bilingual schools for their children, but the first
bilingual school did not open until 1966 in Dade County Miami. The school was
catered to Cuban children. The Cuban revolution in 1959 resulted in the first large
migration of Cubans, who were mostly white and middle class. Unlike the Puerto
Ricans and Mexican Americans they benefited based on their race and social class
(Nieto, 2005).

**Asian American Culture**

Asian Americans consist of many ethnic groups. Countries that they have
originated from include China, Japan, and Vietnam. In the United States they consist
4.6% of the population, while in California they consist 12.7% of the population (U.S.
Census Bureau, 2009). Asian Americans largely reside in states that have large ethnic-
specific communities (Chinatown, Japantown, Little Saigon) and in states that
historically operated as major ports of entry for early Asian laborers. They mainly are
formed as an immigrant community. In 2006, 76% of Asian American adults were
immigrants (Iwamato & Liu, 2010). Racism towards Asian Americans often deals
with mistaking their race and ethnicity and assuming that Asians are from a different
country than they actually are.

Asian Americans have been stereotyped as “model minorities.” The group is
seen to be more successful compared to other minority groups. The stereotype causes
considerable pressure for Asian Americans to conform to it. Data that shows Asian
Americans holding more bachelor’s degrees compared to other groups are
oversimplified. A misconception connected to the stereotype is that Asian Americans
are not the same. Many ethnic populations within the group are socioeconomically disadvantaged and attain college degrees at lower rates (Museus & Kiang, 2009).

**Native American Culture**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, American Indians (the term used) make up less than 1% of United States’ population and less than 1.2% of California’s population (2009). The percentages grouped Alaska Natives with American Indians.

Since colonization, Native Americans were expected to assimilate into mainstream society because they were seen as savages. As a solution, Native American children were taken from their homes and sent to boarding schools where they were punished for speaking their native language. Native Americans are finding that they face a loss of language and culture due to mainstream society (Begaye, 2007). Culture and language play important roles in maintaining their identities. Learning reading and writing are thought by some to be “white man” activities because words were often used to discredit their culture and rob them of their rights. Oral tradition is much more valued in their culture (White-Kaulaity, 2007).

**Middle Eastern American Culture**

The Middle East encompasses countries that are part of Asia and Africa. Middle Eastern countries include Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran. Those who are Middle Eastern count as racially white, according to the United States Census (Love, 2009). This creates a contradiction, as John Tehranian describes it.

On one hand, [Middle Eastern Americans] suffer from the types of discrimination that face minority groups. On the other hand, formally speaking,
Middle Easterners are deemed white by law. Americans of Middle Eastern
descent do not enjoy the benefits of white privilege. Yet, as white under the
law, they are denied the fruits of remedial action. (Love, 2009, p. 405)

Middle Eastern racial groups do not have much in common with each other, but they
are often sorted together in the United States.

**European American Culture**

European American refers to people who are White American. In the United
States they are the majority population. White persons who aren’t Hispanic make up
65.1% of the population in the United States and 41.7% of the population in California
(U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). It is easy for white students to see racism and
discrimination faced by minorities in society but difficult to perceive white privilege
because they are unaware. One such privilege is language (Gallagher-Geurtsen, 2007).

Privileges in language include:

- Being able to learn their first language/culture first and learn their second
  language/culture second.
- Parents can easily express the needs of their child at school.
- Students can speak their native language at school without being judged.
- They can take standardized testing in their native language.

Educators also need to be aware of the privileges because they may unconsciously
elevate the status of English over other students’ home languages and cultures.
Jewish American Culture

In the United States, people who identify themselves as Jews consist of 2.1% of the population while in California they consist of 5.8% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). The Jewish population includes those who define themselves as Jewish based on religion and those define themselves as Jewish based on cultural or ethnic terms. Jews are classified as an unseen minority because they are categorized as white and are seen as highly assimilated (Altman, Inman, Fine, Ritter, & Howard, 2010). Even though anti-Semitism does exist in the United States, Jews don’t fit into the established norms of racism and economic oppression, such as underrepresented minorities and people of color. They can be viewed as a minority though because the United States is mainly a Christian country, and traditions that hold no personal meaning to them are highly celebrated (Christmas) while their religious holidays (Yom Kippur) are not.

Quality of Credential Programs and the Value of Teaching Multicultural Education

What qualifications do teachers have in working with minority students? Credential programs require prospective teachers to take a multicultural education class, but one class is not enough (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005). Therefore, many pre-service teachers may likely feel coming out of their programs feeling ill prepared in teaching diverse groups of students. They are given a quick answer in dealing with the complex issue of diversity (Ngai, 2004). Teacher candidates will be better prepared if multicultural perspectives are infused within all areas rather than
having a single isolated multicultural education class. Many programs need to undergo changes in order to serve future teachers and their students better.

Teachers may also think they are doing their students a service when they don’t take notice of their backgrounds because they do not want to accentuate differences among groups or end up ignoring diverseness among group members (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004), but in fact they are doing students a disservice. By bringing in students’ backgrounds, teachers are able to use that information to help themselves understand their students. Teachers can also try to find similarities between themselves and their students to make a connection with them. “When (middle-school) students see their teachers as caring and supportive, they are more likely to be academically motivated, to engage in classroom activities, and to behave in prosocial, responsible ways” (Weinstein, et al., 2004, p. 34).

Even when educators recognize the need for multicultural education they may face barriers. Teachers themselves need to develop further understanding of other cultures, especially when a majority of them are white middle to upper class women (Weinstein, et al., 2004). They may come into teaching with preconceived notions about particular groups. They need to examine their own beliefs and assumptions and how that may influence them. Not only do most teachers come from a homogenous background, but they also receive little training in working with diverse groups and lack experience (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2005). When pre-service teachers have not experienced a teacher education curriculum that prepares them for diversity, they
are not likely to implement multicultural education themselves. However, it cannot be easily dismissed if the teacher wants to create a caring and inclusive classroom.

There are teachers who bring multiculturalism into the classroom when they share about the holidays of other cultures. But multicultural education should be more than just a few lessons on cultural holidays. Holidays are important, but a culture is not based solely on the holidays they celebrate. Educators may end up stereotyping cultures if they do not dig below the surface when learning about other cultures (Meyer & Rhoades, 2006). Teachers need to give students further opportunities to learn more about their cultures and understand others.

Multicultural education can help the teacher in developing a stronger classroom community (Barnett & Fallon, 2007). With multicultural education students are able to create a community by building upon several areas including trust, membership, and power. Teachers can build trust with their students by getting to know them and giving them opportunities to know one another. It is important for teachers to give their students opportunities to work with everyone in the classroom and thus build stronger relationships among each other. Membership comprises the students feeling like they belong, and students caring for and respecting each other. Students are given power when the teacher gives them opportunities for leadership (such as sharing with the class about their cultures).

Students being taught multicultural education can lead parents to have a more favorable view of a school. Their children are not forced to rid themselves of their cultural identity but instead acknowledge it. At the same time, multicultural education
may help promote parental involvement. Parents can contribute to their child’s classroom when their culture is explored since they have first-hand knowledge. They are excellent resources of information. Parental involvement is important because it helps build a positive relationship between the school and parents and create a stronger sense of community for all.

“Regardless of the language they speak at home, the ability to read, compute, and achieve academic success can be accomplished when caring, well-educated teachers have a belief that the children can learn and a willingness to show that their culture and language are valued” (Weddington, 2010, p. 55). If teachers want their students to be successful, it is important for them to recognize culture. It shows that teachers care when they have personal interest in students’ lives.

Utilizing Multicultural Literature

What is multicultural literature? Multicultural literature is composed of books that include diverse cultural groups and are usually written by authors of color. They do not merely have a person of color as a character. The characters are portrayed as individuals. The books include cultural aspects of a particular group or groups.

There are numerous benefits of having multicultural literature available in the classroom. Using multicultural literature helps students to identify with their own culture, introduces them to other cultures, and safely opens conversation about diversity (Colby & Lyon, 2004). Multicultural literature is a way for outsiders to access information about other cultures. The stories can heighten students’ sensitivity to those who are from different cultures and let them see other cultural perspectives.
While identifying differences it is important to remember to find the similarities among cultures in order to bring unity among them. Simultaneously, multicultural literature enables us to see that there are more similarities than differences among cultures. Children exposed to multicultural literature tend to develop more positive attitudes toward differences (Wan, 2006). Self-esteem also increases when students read positive stories about their own ethnic group (Jetton & Savage-Davis, 2005). The absence of such books can make minority students feel undervalued in the classroom.

When presenting students to literature it is helpful for teachers to unify cultures by identifying themes that are relevant in every culture (Wan, 2006). This further supports the students’ understanding that there are more similarities than differences among cultures. Such commonalities include folktales and holiday celebrations. Cinderella for example is a folktale that has different versions from many cultures. Holidays are important for many children because they represent important days when children learn about their family customs and cultural heritage. In every culture family is also an important aspect. And another theme is injustice, because every culture has faced injustice in one way or another.

Merely exposing students to multicultural literature is not enough because it may lead to indifference (Louie, 2006). It is important for the teacher to use the literature to open up dialogue and introduce the books in meaningful ways. In order to open up dialogue, students should be able to relate to what they are reading so that they can make connections between themselves and the story. A strategy the teacher can employ to enhance the sharing of multicultural literature is to draw on students’
prior knowledge and have them respond to the stories through their own experiences. It is also valuable for teachers to give information on the author’s background and purpose for writing the story (Mathis, 2001).

Additional strategies can be utilized when students respond to multicultural literature which will help them develop further critical understanding, such as multicultural books (Louie, 2006). Strategies that help students reach such an understanding of literature are evaluating authenticity, discovering the values in conflict resolution, considering characters’ perspectives, questioning the portrayal of character, and developing understanding versus preference. Students can evaluate authenticity of the story by examining the illustrations and analyzing texts’ source notes. Students recognize the values of the characters to understand why they do what they do. In considering characters’ perspectives students decide if the characters’ actions are reasonable and appropriate. They question the portrayal of characters by evaluating how the media portrays them and how they are stereotyped. Even though students may prefer certain multicultural books over others they develop a simultaneous understanding that certain books are more culturally accurate than others.

Multicultural books can help students develop empathetic and conceptual understanding (Louie, 2006). Students can reach an empathetic understanding when they consider the perspective and share emotional responses. In considering the characters’ points of view, students evaluate the characters’ feelings and actions. Students can connect to the characters when they share similar emotional experiences.
A conceptual understanding is reached when students understand the implications of culture. They accept that people in different cultural groups can act, think, and feel differently from themselves.

**Summary**

“Multicultural education argues against the melting pot, colorblindness, cultural deprivation, and uniformity ideologies as acceptable standards for how to interact with diverse students” (Gay, 2004, p. 209). Multicultural education is an improved option in working with diverse student populations compared to the alternatives, which dismiss the significance of race. Student backgrounds should be viewed as assets instead of deficits. Teaching all kids the same way doesn’t work. In order to help students succeed in school, it is important for educators to incorporate students’ cultures. It helps to desegregate education. It is also important to bear in mind that multicultural education does not only apply to minority students but to all students.

One particular school that sees the need for multicultural education is Westlake Charter School. The school, located in the Sacramento area, adopted an international thematic curriculum that promotes diversity and appreciation of other cultures. Each grade level focuses on a continent starting from kindergarten through fifth grade. The students discover a selection of themes that integrate different subject matter including language arts, math, and art (Westlake Charter School, 2008). Such a curriculum will help students develop a better understanding of other cultures and should provide a model to other schools.
In this chapter, bilingual education, the value of multicultural education for the student, the value of teachers teaching multicultural education, and the benefits of using multicultural literature were reviewed. The next chapter explains the process of creating the handbook.
Chapter 3

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

Multicultural literature in the classroom is important and can be used as an effective way to introduce students to other cultures. The handbook was developed based on research findings from the literature review. The lessons created for the handbook implements literature from different cultures and are divided thematically instead of by culture. The justifications for each of the five themes are given. The process in developing the handbook is presented as well.

The guiding belief that helped me in developing the handbook was, “It is important for students to have a better understanding of other cultures.” The following questions that helped direct me in developing the lessons were:

1) How can the lessons benefit the student?
2) How can teachers implement the lessons to be reflective of the themes?
3) How can multicultural literature be used to help students learn and appreciate cultures?

Connection to the Literature

The literature review showed countless ways in which multicultural education is beneficial for students and teachers. Personal meaning will be produced and learning would be more interesting to students (Gay, 2003). Multicultural education leads to students feeling valued in the classroom: it fosters students’ self-esteem, teaches them to respect their own and other cultures, and leads to higher motivation in doing well in the classroom (Ginsberg, 2005). Higher motivation, respect, and other
such benefits are also beneficial to the teacher. Students will achieve better in school when they are more motivated. Students learning to respect other cultures will help develop a stronger classroom community (Barnett & Fallon, 2007).

Multicultural literature can be used in teaching them about other cultures. Such books help students to identify with their own culture, introduce them to other cultures, and can be used as a safe way to open conversation about diversity (Colby & Lyon, 2004). The stories can increase student’s sensitivity to those who are from different cultures and let them view other cultural perspectives. In order for teachers to introduce the books in a meaningful manner though, they need to open up dialogue. By opening up dialogue, teachers will help students develop further understanding (Mathis, 2001).

The books can help students develop a critical, empathetic, and conceptual understanding. Students reach a critical understanding of the literature when they evaluate authenticity, discover the values in conflict resolution, consider characters’ perspectives, question the portrayal of character, and develop understanding versus preference. Students reach an empathetic understanding when they consider the perspective and share emotional responses. A conceptual understanding is reached when students understand the implications of culture (Louie, 2006).

Using the information found in the literature review – especially how to use multicultural literature in a meaningful way – the handbook was developed.
Methodology

After finishing the review of literature, I began to develop the handbook. A “Letter to the Teacher” explains the intent of the handbook. In the handbook an explanation is also included to explain how the lessons are organized. The handbook provides teachers with lessons utilizing books that will help their students learn and appreciate other cultures. The first step in creating the lessons was choosing relevant themes – themes that can be applied to every culture. After the themes were selected I searched for quality book titles that fit the themes and represented different cultures. Books were chosen by looking at a variety of sources that include:


Once the relevant titles were chosen, they were obtained through the local library. The next step was creating the lessons. Based on the book(s) selected for the lesson, the key concepts and key questions were created to serve as a guide on the focus of the
lesson. The contents of the books shaped the tasks/activities that were created. In most lessons, the books are used to introduce the students to the theme and the day’s tasks. The books are usually read aloud to the students by the teacher. The teacher can choose for the students to read the books in groups, partners, or individually if able to obtain numerous copies of a book. The tasks created are meant to help students grasp the key concepts. The tasks are also meant to support the theme and help students learn more about other cultures.

**Thematic Lessons**

This is the main section of the handbook. The lessons in the handbook are thematically divided. The lessons are presented thematically rather than divided by culture because it shows that there are more similarities than differences among cultures. The themes are a way to unify the cultures. There are five themes that students will explore in the handbook’s lessons:

The first theme is self identity and family. The intent is for students to become more aware of who they are and to learn to appreciate others for who they are. Family is linked to self identity because the family is a part of you. There are many types of families just like there are many different kinds of people.

The second theme is folktales and fairytales. Cinderella is an example of a folktale that has different versions from many cultures. It can easily serve the purpose of showing the commonalities between cultures while at the same time containing culturally specific aspects.
The third theme is cultural traditions. Holidays are a part of cultural traditions. For many children they represent important days when they first learn about cultural heritage and family customs. Many holidays are culture specific and it is important to look beyond the surface rather than over simplify them.

The fourth theme is injustice. Almost every culture has faced injustice in one way or another. It is important to learn about past grievances to make sure they don’t happen again. Looking at the past also helps us see what each culture has been through to get to where they are today.

The fifth theme is friendship. Developing friendships with everyone, even those who are different, helps develop a classroom community. Ideally students learn to all get along with and respect each other.

**Teacher Resources**

The handbook provides a set of guidelines that can be used when assessing what books to choose. The guidelines were created by the Council on Interracial Books for Children (1974). This section also includes a bibliography of children’s multicultural picture books that can be made available in the classroom. The books on the list are broken down by theme and by culture. Having a numerous selection of books that the students can read and look at is important. Including multicultural books that reflect student’s culture in the classroom leads to increased self-esteem (Jetton & Savage-Davis, 2005). When students do not feel represented in books, it can make them feel undervalued in the classroom. In regards to others, students who are
exposed to multicultural books tend to develop more positive attitudes toward differences (Wan, 2006).

**Plan for Implementation and Dispersion**

The purpose of this project is to review the research on the value of multicultural education, the benefits for the student, the benefits for the educator, and the ways that multicultural literature can be utilized in the classroom. The handbook is the resulting project. My objective is to present this handbook to my future colleagues at the school in which I will be working. I will work together with my colleagues during staff meetings in implementing the handbook in our classrooms. I will want to receive continuous feedback on any problems they run into. After receiving their feedback on the handbook, I will make any necessary changes before distributing it to others.
Chapter 4

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the project was to give teachers the research on why multicultural education is needed and how cultural literature is an effective way to promote it. The handbook was created to provide teachers a way to bring more multiculturalism into the classroom to increase student’s cultural understanding of others using books. In this chapter, there is a discussion on the significance of the project, the limitations, recommendations, and final conclusions.

Discussion

The process of putting the project together helped strengthen my view on the importance of multicultural education. It is important for teachers to understand that multicultural education is not something that should be easily dismissed. It is necessary in order to reach all students, to help them make further connections to what they are learning. Students in classrooms today are evolving. Along with the students, teachers need to constantly evolve and add to their knowledge base by finding better ways to meet their students’ needs. They also need to understand that learning is a lifelong process. Teachers need to look beyond the classroom and seek available resources that can help them better reach their students.

The project also reinforced the importance of the power of books. Books can serve many purposes. This project utilized multicultural literature as a way to introduce and increase students’ understanding of other cultures. They are a valuable teaching tool that can easily be utilized by teachers. They help students see that they
are included in the classroom and are a part of the larger society. There isn’t any justification to not have multicultural literature in the classroom, when there are so many good books out there that can be considered such.

The handbook is one such resource that teachers can utilize in the classroom in order to acknowledge the diversity in classrooms today. It can help teachers who do not feel prepared to address issues of diversity when credentialing programs only require the prospective teachers to take one multicultural class (Cho & De Castro-Ambrosetti, 2005). Teachers cannot expect to reach all students if they do not learn to embrace student’s cultures. Multiculturalism for the most part is not addressed in schools either except for superficial lessons based on cultural heroes and holidays. The supplementary lessons created are a way to address such problems and promote multiculturalism in the classroom. Children’s multicultural books are easily attainable for the teacher as well, through public libraries or their school library.

**Limitations**

A limitation of the handbook is that it will not cover all cultures. It includes African American, Latino American, Asian American, Native American, Middle Eastern American, European American, and Jewish American culture. The cultures presented are broad terms and encompass many cultures within themselves, so not every culture within them can be covered either. The school year would not be sufficient to cover all the cultures thoroughly, so students would have a limited amount of time in covering the seven cultures. The handbook includes five themes,
Thus not all aspects of culture would be explored. Another limitation is that the handbook is mainly designed for primary grade teachers.

Teachers of other grade levels will have to modify the lessons to match it to their grade level if they wish to use the handbook. The books used in the lessons consist of children’s picture books. The books listed under the bibliography in the handbook are also children’s picture books, so books would need to be found for students of higher grade levels. The bibliography does not list all books available. Another limitation is that some cultures and themes have more books available while other cultures have a more limited selection.

**Recommendations**

Classroom libraries need to include books of as many cultures as possible especially cultures that are present in the class. This helps students see that their culture is represented and valued. The books should also be grouped into different reading levels, so students at higher reading levels are able to read books that challenge them and students at lower reading levels are not struggling to read the books. A trip to the local library can also help students access more books. It would be helpful to the teacher if there was a more current guide to children’s multicultural literature for them, especially because there are more books available on the market.

The cultures and themes not covered in the handbook can be included. Some of the books used in the lessons can also be substituted with other books that may be more representative of their students. Teachers should give opportunities for students to share about their culture and find ways for parents to contribute as well. Teachers
can bring in cultural items to share and can also ask students and parents to do the same. Other ways the teacher can incorporate multiculturalism besides using children’s picture books is through informational text and educational videos.

**Suggested Research**

A study can be conducted to compare students who are exposed to those who are not exposed to multicultural curriculum with respect to their levels of prejudice toward other cultures. Another topic of study is how to revise teacher credentialing programs that will integrate multiculturalism in order for teachers to better serve the diverse student population.

**Conclusions**

The handbook was created to provide teachers a way to include more multiculturalism in the classroom. The lessons in the handbook use children’s literature to introduce students to and engage students in learning about other cultures. The themes selected are a way to help students see that there are more similarities than differences among cultures. It is the author’s hope that the handbook can be a useful teaching resource for teachers who want to go beyond focusing on heroes and holidays. Thus they can bring multiculturalism in the classroom so that students can develop a better understanding of other cultures.
APPENDIX

Utilizing Multicultural Children’s Literature to Increase Cultural Understanding: A Handbook for Teachers
Utilizing Multicultural Children’s Literature to Increase Cultural Understanding:

A Handbook for Teachers

By Helen Huang

California State University, Sacramento
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Dear Teacher,

This handbook is intended to help you integrate more children’s literature with a focus on multicultural perspectives into your curriculum. My hope is that your students gain a greater cultural understanding, so that we can fully prepare them to live and participate in our diverse society. It is important to remember that the recommended stories and activities in the handbook are not all encompassing and instead are intended to serve as a starting point for students to develop further understanding and appreciation of other cultures. Therefore, teachers should utilize other resources available to add to the lessons. The students themselves are one such resource. Students are able to constantly expand their knowledge of culture in many different ways, and this handbook can be a key tool in this process.

Sincerely,

Helen Huang
How to Use the Handbook

In the handbook are five themes: self identity/family, folktales and fairytales, cultural traditions, injustice, and friendship. After the themes were decided, relevant book titles to be utilized in creating the lessons were found. The books were chosen by looking at a variety of book lists. In most lessons, the teacher introduces the book(s) through reading aloud. The teacher can choose for the students to read the books in groups, partners, or individually if they can obtain numerous copies.

The lessons in this handbook are organized by theme. Each lesson tells what book(s) are to be used and what culture they are from. The books are a way to get students into thinking about the themes. The key concepts presented are the main ideas that the students should learn from the lesson. The key questions are what students should reflect on during the lesson. These questions guide students in learning the key concepts. The activities consist of the tasks involved in supporting the theme and helping students learn more about cultures including their own. Many of the lessons are designed to be separated into multiple class periods and can be modified however the teacher sees fit.

Following the lessons is a list of guidelines that teachers can use to help them evaluate children’s books. When teachers want to determine whether a particular book might have racist undertones, they can refer to these guidelines to help them select books that are more appropriate. The guidelines can similarly be applied to judging the validity in one respect of multicultural books. A bibliography of multicultural children’s literature is also provided for the teacher as a helpful reference.
SELF IDENTITY/FAMILY

The students will take a closer look at who they are by exploring their backgrounds. Students will also in turn learn more about their classmates and their backgrounds. Family is connected to self identity because family plays an important part of who people are. Students will find that there are many types of families just like there many types of people. Both kinds of groups are unique in their own ways but more similarities than differences exist among people, despite what students might think.
We Are Who We Are

Theme: Self Identity

Book: *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox

Key Concepts:
- People have more similarities than differences among each other.
- We should learn to appreciate the differences among people.

Key Questions:
- What are the differences among people?
- What are the similarities among people?

Activity:

Task One
Opening – As a class, students will brainstorm how people are different and how they are the same. Record their answers on the board into two columns – Similarities/Differences. After the list is substantial enough, discuss if there are more items listed as similarities or differences.

Task Two
Read to the class *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox. Ask students: What differences and similarities does the book point out? Add their answers to the list of Similarities/Differences. Reinforce the main idea of the story – differences make us unique but the similarities connect all of us together. Then discuss what it would be like if everybody was exactly the same. Students should come to a similar conclusion that we should appreciate the differences among everybody.

Task Three
Provide students with a paper doll template. Students are to decorate the doll to represent their culture. They can research clothing ideas on the internet or ask their parents. Students will have to glue paper dolls onto cardboard before cutting them out. Materials they can use include fabric, felt, colored paper, markers, yarn, and buttons. The assignment is to be completed at home with their parents. As homework, students also need to bring in five items which represent their culture to the classroom.

Task Four
Students need to write a paragraph about the culture their doll represents and the clothing the doll is wearing. They will write another paragraph about the five items they brought and how they are a part of their culture. Students will use their
paragraphs to help them practice for a three-to-five minute presentation on their dolls and items.

Task Five
Give students enough time to practice their presentations. Then have volunteers or call on students to share their dolls as well as the items they brought to the class. The rest of the class may ask questions at the end of each presentation.

*The dolls can be hung on the walls of the classroom after all presentations are done.
Snapshots of Your Family

Theme: Self Identity/Family

Book: *In My Family* by Carmen Lomas Garza (Mexican-Latino)

Key Concepts:
- Family plays an important role in your life.
- Each family has its own unique family traditions.

Key Questions:
- What are family traditions?
- What special memories do you have growing up so far?

Activity:

Task One
Opening – Ask students: What do you know about family traditions? Explain to them that family traditions are things that families regularly do together – like visiting grandparents every weekend or making breakfast during the weekends for their mothers. Afterwards, give all students an opportunity to share some family traditions they have with a partner. Then pick a couple of students to share their family traditions with the class.

Task Two
Introduce *In My Family* by Carmen Lomas Garza to the class. For each page, show students the pictures and have them predict what the page is about before reading the page’s text. After you are finished reading the story, have students write down some connections they can make between themselves and parts of the story. When everyone is done each student can share with a partner. Pick a couple of students to share with everybody.

Task Three
The class will all be contributing in making a class book of Family Pictures. First they will brainstorm on a piece of paper the memorable moments that they have growing up so far with their family. Tell them they are to choose one of the memorable moments to be a part of the book.

Task Four
On the top half of a piece of paper, students will have a drawing, collage, or photograph of the memory they choose. On the bottom half they will neatly write (or type) a paragraph explaining the picture and the memory. You will create the cover
page using a picture of all the students. Once all the students finish their pages, bind the pages together to make a book.

*The book can be placed in the class library for all to enjoy.
All Types of Families

Theme: Family

Book: Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers: A Collection of Family Poems by Mary Ann Hoberman

Key Concepts:
- There are many different types of families.

Key Questions:
- How are the families in the poems like your family?
- How are the families in the poems different from your family?
- What makes your family unique?

Activity:

Task One
Opening – Tell the students to talk to a partner about the members of their families. Then have them brainstorm and write down what makes a family. Once they are done brainstorming, have some students share with the class what they came up with.

Task Two
Read a few poems each day from Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers: A Collection of Family Poems by Mary Ann Hoberman. Ask the students to make connections to the poems that are read and ask if they can relate to any of them.

Task Three
Students will write an acrostic family poem. The acrostic poem will use the letters in the word “family” to begin each line. When they are finished with the “family” poem they can write another acrostic poem about a particular person in their family. Have the students share the poems with each other.

Task Four
Have students come up with ten questions they can use to interview an older (adult) family member. For homework they will need to conduct the interview. Each answer must be written in complete sentences.
Sample Interview Questions-
When and where were you born?
If you were born in another country, how is it different from here?
How many siblings do you have?
What do you like to do for fun?
Did you go to college?
What jobs have you held?
How many children do you have?
What was your proudest moment?

Task Five
Using the answers from the interview questions, students will write a paragraph reflecting on what they learned about their interviewees. As they are writing they should consider the following questions: Why did you pick that person to interview? Did you learn something that surprised you? What was the most interesting thing that you learned? Do you see the person you interviewed differently now?

Task Six
The student’s final assignment/product is to create a family tree. The family tree doesn’t necessarily have to be a ‘tree’ but can take other forms that represent the student and their family. Students need to include immediate family members (parents, siblings) but can also include intermediate family members (pets, uncles, aunts, cousins).
FOLKTALES AND FAIRYTALES

The students will read folktales and fairytales, providing them with a depiction of different cultures. Stories such as Cinderella have many cultural variations but they share common themes among each other, reinforcing that there are many commonalities among cultures. Folktales will also help students learn important morals and life lessons that apply to all people, no matter what culture they are from.
Around the World with Cinderella

Theme: Folktales and Fairytales

Books:
- Jouanah: A Hmong Cinderella by Jewell Reinhart Coburn (Asian)
- The Persian Cinderella by Shirley Climo (Iranian-Middle Eastern)
- Raisel’s Riddle by Erica Silverman (Jewish)

Key Concepts:
- Cinderella is a universal story that helps us connect with cultures from all over the world.
- Cultural variants can be discovered in stories such as Cinderella.

Key Questions:
- How are the Cinderella stories similar?
- What cultural differences are there in the stories?

Activity:

Task One
Opening – Review what the students already know about Cinderella. If it is necessary, read to them the story of Cinderella that they are likely most familiar with (the Disney version). Ask them if they have heard other Cinderella stories and what they know about them. Tell students that there are many book versions of Cinderella and the class is going to be introduced to some of them.

Task Two
Read to the class Jouanah: A Hmong Cinderella by Jewell Reinhart Coburn to the students. Ask students: What cultural elements are present in the story? Discuss.

Task Three
Read to the class The Persian Cinderella by Shirley Climo to the students. Ask students: What cultural elements are present in the story? Discuss. As a class, make a Venn diagram and ask them to compare and contrast this Cinderella story with the Hmong version.

Task Four
Read Raisel’s Riddle by Erica Silverman to the class. Ask students: What cultural elements are present in the story? Discuss. Have the students do a Venn diagram for the Jewish Cinderella story and the Hmong Cinderella story with a partner. Then they should make a Venn diagram for the Jewish Cinderella story and the Persian...
Cinderella individually. When they are done have a whole class discussion with the students about what they wrote on their Venn diagrams.

Task Five
Split the class into six groups. Two groups are responsible for finding five facts about the Hmong culture, two groups for the Persian (Iranian) culture, and two groups for the Jewish culture. Students can utilize books that the library may have or the internet. Have the whole class discuss findings with one another.

Task Six
Individually, students are to read a Cinderella story from another culture. They will make a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting their story with one of the other Cinderella stories they have already read. They are also responsible for finding five facts about their chosen culture. Students will get in small groups and share their findings with classmates.
The Way Things Came To Be

Theme: Folktales and Fairytales

Books: Raven: A Trickster Tale from the Pacific Northwest by Gerald McDermott (Native American)

Key Concepts:
- There are many ways to explain things.

Key Questions:
- What do you know about legends?
- What are trickster tales?

Activity:

Task One
Opening – Ask students why they think the sun is in the sky. Explain to them what legends are.

Task Two
Read to the class Raven: A Trickster Tale from the Pacific Northwest by Gerald McDermott. After the story, ask the students how the story explained the sun being in the sky and how Raven was a trickster.

Task Three
Students will write their own legends that explain how something came to be. They can look at other books you might have for ideas. First they need to create a story map to help them brainstorm what they are going to write about. The story map must have the following parts: setting, characters, problem(s), solution, and ending.

Task Four
When the students have completed their story maps, they can begin writing a rough draft. Those who finish first can partner up with each other and peer edit each other’s work before turning it in. After you edit their papers, the students will write a final draft and include illustrations.

Task Five
Native Americans are known storytellers. The students will get an opportunity to be storytellers by sharing their stories through author’s chair—taking turns in reading their story to the class.
And the Moral of the Story is…

Theme: Folktales and Fairytales

Books: Tunjur! Tunjur! Tunjur!: A Palestinian Folktale by Margaret Read McDonald (Middle Eastern)
Fat Cat: A Danish Folktale by Margaret Read McDonald (European)
The Lost Horse: A Chinese Folktale by Ed Young (Asian)
Why the Sky is Far Away: A Nigerian Folktale retold by Mary-Joan Gerson (African)

Key Concepts:
• Many cultures value the same important morals and life lessons.

Key Questions:
• What is the importance of the lesson that the story is trying to teach you?

Activity:

Task One
Opening- Ask students if they have ever read a story that taught them a lesson. If so, what lessons did they learn? Explain to them what a moral in a story is.

Task Two
Split the class into groups of four. Each group will be assigned to one of the stories. Students will read the story together in their groups. When they are done reading, they are to discuss what the moral of the story is.

Task Three
In their groups, students will each draw a picture from a different part of the story. The picture should reflect an important part of the story. Make sure the group discusses amongst themselves what they are each going to draw beforehand.

Task Four
Once they are finished the students will practice with their group in retelling the story using their pictures. After a sufficient amount of time, have the groups present. After each group is done presenting a story, the rest of the class will discuss the moral of the story and its importance.
CULTURAL TRADITIONS

Students will take a closer look at how some holidays are celebrated to create further cultural understanding in them. Culturally specific holidays are such a part of cultural traditions that it is important to not oversimplify them. Holidays help students learn about their cultural heritage and family customs. Values and beliefs are also shared through holidays.
A New Year – A New Beginning

Theme: Cultural Traditions

Books: New Clothes for New Year’s Day by Hyun-Joo Bae (Korean-Asian)  
New Year at the Pier: A Rosh Hashanah Story by April Halprin Waylard  
(Jewish)

Key Concepts:  
• People from around the world celebrate in different ways.  
• There are holidays that represent important days when children learn about their family customs and cultural heritage.

Key Questions:  
• How do different peoples celebrate New Year’s differently?  
• What do the different traditions represent?

Activity:

Task One  
Opening – Ask students how they celebrate New Year’s. Do they know of any other New Year’s celebrations that others celebrate?

Task Two  
Read to the class New Year at the Pier: A Rosh Hashanah Story by April Halprin Waylard. Discuss the significance of Tashlich and making “I’m sorry” lists. Have students make connections to the story. For example: Have they ever felt sorry for something that they did?

Task Three  
Students are to write down three things they are sorry for and how they can do better next time in similar situations. Then have students toss their papers into a recycle bin to signify them starting over.

Task Four  
Read to the class New Clothes for New Year’s Day by Hyun-Joo Bae. Ask the students what the new clothes represent. Have the students make connections to the story. For example: Do they ever dress up for important days? Are there special days when they dress up in clothes from their culture?

Task Five  
Students go to write about a holiday they celebrate. It could be a holiday that is part of their culture but does not have to be. In the writing they can include the festivities that
take place. Make sure they are being as descriptive as possible in their writing. They could include things they may see, sounds they may hear, foods they may taste and smell, or emotions they may feel.
Festival of Lights

Theme: Cultural Traditions

Book:  *This is the Dreidel* by Abby Levine (Jewish)

Key Concepts:
- Certain values and beliefs may be shared through certain holidays.
- By looking beyond the surface we can create further understanding about a cultural tradition.

Key Questions:
- Why is Hanukkah an important Jewish holiday?
- What are the symbols associated with Hanukkah and what are their significances?

Activity:

Task One
Opening – Ask the class if they have ever heard about Hanukkah and if anybody in the class celebrates it. Then have the students make a KWL chart, which has three columns. The students will fill out the first part of the KWL chart – K, what they know about Hanukkah. After a few minutes have the students share with the class what they came up with. Then have students fill out the second part of the KWL chart – W, what they want to know about Hanukkah. When they are done have them share their written responses.

Task Two
As an introduction to Hanukkah, read to the class *This is the Dreidel* by Abby Levine. After the story, ask students if the book answered their questions about what they wanted to know about Hanukkah. The students will fill out the last part of their KWL chart – L, what they learned about Hanukkah. Discuss as a class what they learned.

Task Three
Break the students up into four groups. Each group is responsible in finding information regarding one of the four symbols found in the story related to Hanukkah: the dreidel, gelt, latkes, and the menorah. Students will first work individually in finding further information by using books or the computer. After they are done with this, students will come back together to their groups and discuss what they found. The groups will then create an informative poster on their symbol.
Task Four
Groups will take turns sharing their posters. After the presentations, have the students take out their KWL chart and fill out the last part of the chart again based on what they learned about Hanukkah from the presentations.

Task Five
Students end the lesson by making a dreidel with cardstock using the template. Show the students how to make the dreidel step by step as students follow along. Once they are done making the dreidel, explain the directions of the game and provide a copy of the directions to the students. Allow the students some time to play the game using beans or small objects you may have.

*Dreidel template provide by www.enchantedlearning.com.

Instructions (provided by www.wikipedia.org/wiki/dreidel):
Each player begins with an equal number of game pieces (usually 10–15). A game piece can be any object.
At the beginning of each round, every participant puts one game piece into the center "pot". In addition, every time the pot is empty and sometimes if it has just one game piece left, every player puts a piece in the pot.
Each player spins the dreidel once during their turn. Depending on which player side is facing up when it stops spinning, they give game pieces to or take pieces from the pot:
a) If נ (nun) is facing up, the player does nothing.
b) If ג (gimel) is facing up, the player gets everything in the pot.
c) If ח (hei/hey) is facing up, the player gets half of the pieces in the pot. (If there are an odd number of pieces in the pot, the player takes half of the total plus one.)
d) If ש (shin) or פ (pei) is facing up, the player adds a game piece to the pot.
A player who is out of pieces is either "out" or may ask another player for a “loan.”
Make a Paper Dreidel

1. Print this page and glue it to thin cardboard (like a cereal box).
2. Cut along the edges. Decorate the dreidel.
3. Cut an x in the tiny circle on the top.
4. Fold along the inside lines and form a top shape. Glue the flaps into place.
5. Stick a straw or wooden dowel through the tiny circle at the top.

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Celebrating Life and Culture

Cultural Traditions

Book: Day of the Dead by Tony Johnston (Mexican-Latino)

Key Concepts:
- Cultures have celebrations unique to them.
- There are traditional foods that are unique to each culture.

Key Questions:
- What is the purpose of Day of the Dead?
- What cultural foods are associated with the holiday?

Activity:

Task One
Opening – Ask students what they know about Halloween and how it is celebrated. Ask them what they know about Day of the Dead.

Task Two
Read to the class Day of the Dead by Tony Johnston. Give further information on the holiday by explaining the marigolds, salt and water, skulls, and the pan de muertos. Ask the students why they think this holiday is a happy one. Explain to them that the holiday is a time when family members who have passed away return to partake in the celebrations with their loved ones. Students can discuss other ways people honor those who have passed.

Task Three
Have the students compare this holiday with Halloween. They will make a two column chart that they need to fill out with the following information: date, activities, food, and images associated with the holiday. Students will discover that the two holidays are distinctly different.

Task Four
Food is an important part of the story. Have the students recall what foods were featured in the story. Provide further information on the foods to ensure students’ understanding of what they are. Ask students what cultural foods they eat, including foods featured during holidays or celebrations.

Task Five
The class is to make a cultural cookbook. Each student is responsible for contributing two pages. One page would be a recipe to a food from their culture. This is something
they could ask their parents, or they can look for a recipe from the internet or from cookbooks. They also need to add a drawing or picture to this page. The drawing or picture can be of the dish itself or perhaps the student with their family enjoying the dish. For the second page, students need to write a paragraph about the food including its origins and significance. Assemble their pages together to create the book.

*Copies of the book can be made for all the students to enjoy.
*You can have an International Food Festival. Students can bring in their dish and introduce it to the class.
INJUSTICE

Students will learn that injustices are hurtful and unfair. Injustices usually involve one group taking power and rights away from another group. Many cultural groups have faced a form of injustice that they had to overcome. It is valuable for students to learn about past events that have helped shaped today’s world, in order to help ensure that they do not occur again.
Hope Springs Eternal

Theme: Injustice

Book: A Place Where Sunflowers Grow by Amy Lee-Tai (Japanese-Asian)

Key Concepts:
- Hope is important to have during difficult times.
- It is important to not make generalizations about people based solely on race.

Key Questions:
- How were the Japanese treated unfairly?
- How would you feel living in an internment camp?

Activity:

Task One
Opening – Have the students think about the following questions: How would they feel if they were forced to move? If they could only bring what they could carry, what would they bring? How would they feel if they were treated as criminals? Ask students to discuss their thoughts about the questions.

Task Two
Read to the class A Place Where Sunflowers Grow by Amy Lee-Tai. Have the students reflect on the key questions. Discuss with students how the Japanese in America were mainly citizens (as well as what a citizen is) and why they were placed in internment camps. It is important to not make generalizations about a group of people based on the actions of others, just because they belong to the same race. Help them understand this concept by relating it to what they personally know. For example: If one kindergartner does not know how to follow directions, does that mean all of them do not know how to follow directions? (No)

Task Three
The main character, Mari, is able to find some happiness in her art classes. Have the students draw what makes them happy. When they are done have them share their drawings with their classmates.

Task Four
Ask students what the sunflower in the story represented (hope). Discuss with them how the sunflowers represent hope in the story and why hope is important. Provide students with cups, potting soil, and sunflower seeds, so that they can grow their own sunflowers. The students will take turns placing soil into cups and placing their seeds in the middle before watering.
*Make sure to place the cups where they can get sunlight and have the students water their sunflowers daily. Once they start to bloom students can take flowers home and replant them.

Possible Field Trip: The California Museum is located in Sacramento. One of the exhibits is centered around the Japanese Americans during World War II. It includes artwork made in the internment camps. Each winter, the museum also has presenters who share their experiences of immigration and internment.
Remaining True to Who You Are

Theme: Injustice

Book: Cheyenne Again by Eve Bunting (Cheyenne-Native American)

Key Concepts:
- There are multiple sides to every story.
- What you think is best may not be viewed as such by others.

Key Questions:
- How were Indian children treated unfairly?
- Does anyone have the right to force you into doing something that is not just?

Activity:

Task One
Opening – Ask students how they would feel if they were taken from their family. How would they feel if they were forced to do something they didn’t want to?

Task Two
Read to the class Cheyenne Again by Eve Bunting. After the story is finished, have students reflect on these questions: Why did Young Bull’s dad say Young Bull must go to school? What were some ways in which the people at school tried to rid Young Bull of his culture? Did Young Bull make a good decision when he decided to run away from the school? How did Young Bull become “Cheyenne Again”?

Task Three
Students will be split into groups of five. Each group is responsible in researching cultural information about a Native American tribe found in California, including but not limited to Chumash, Maidu, Mohave, and Washoe. Cultural information can include language, food, shelter, location, clothing, recreation, festivals/celebrations, and religious practices. Each person will make a matrix with the information they find.

Task Four
Students will use the information from their research to create a poster that summarizes the information. Pictures or drawings need to be included. When they are finished they will present the poster to the rest of the class.

Possible Field Trip: California State Indian Museum is a California State Park located in Sacramento. Cultural items are on display. The museum has several events throughout the year including Acorn Day when visitors can observe acorn being prepared for food and learn arts and crafts making.
Heroes

Theme: Injustice

Books:  
- *I Have a Dream* by Martin Luther King, Jr. (African American)  
- *Harvesting Hope* by Cesar Chavez (Mexican-Latino)

Key Concepts:  
- Discrimination is hurtful and unfair.  
- Anybody can be a hero – heroes come in many forms.  
- Conflicts can be resolved peacefully.

Key Questions:  
- What qualities make someone a hero?  
- What injustices were Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cesar Chavez rebelling against?  
- How did they achieve their goals?

Activity:

Task One  
Opening – Tell the students to visualize what a hero looks like. Ask them to share what they visualized with the class. Did any of them think about Martin Luther King, Jr.? Ask students what they know about him. Why is he someone that we honor each year?

Task Two  
Give the students a copy of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s speech. Read to the students *I Have a Dream* by Martin Luther King, Jr. while they follow along on their worksheet. Stop at certain points of the speech to discuss with the students what they think Martin Luther King, Jr. is saying. Background knowledge needs to be provided to give students a better understanding. Students should write notes down during the discussion.

Task Three  
Lead students in a discussion about what problems they see in their school, neighborhood, or country and ways in which the problems can be solved. Student’s responses will be recorded on the board. The students will then be assigned to write their own “I Have a Dream” speeches. In the speech they are going to write what they would like to see changed and a few sentences on how they will accomplish that dream.
Task Four
When you have edited their speeches, the students will rewrite them neatly onto the final draft scroll paper. They will cut the scroll out and glue them onto another piece of colored paper.

*The speeches can be hung on the walls of the classroom.

Task Five
Opening – Tell the students that California was the first state that recognized Cesar Chavez Day as a state holiday. Ask students what they know about him and why they think he is an important figure – especially in California.

Task Six
Read to the students Harvesting Hope by Cesar Chavez. Discuss the following questions as a class: What injustices did Cesar Chavez and the migrant farm workers face? How did he help improve the lives of migrant farm workers? What makes him a hero?

Task Seven
Have students write down similarities they can see between Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cesar Chavez. Ask them to share their responses. The most important similarity that students should find is the two men’s nonviolent approach in solving conflicts. Use this discussion to lead the students into talking about the conflicts that they may have faced at school or at home.

Task Eight
Split the class into groups and have them pick a scenario in which they can use nonviolence to solve a problem. They will come up with a skit for the scenario. Once they have had enough time to practice, have students perform their skit.

Task Nine
Ask the students who they see as heroes and what qualities make them heroes. Write the qualities down on the board. Assign the students to write a paragraph on the person they see as a hero. Make sure they address what makes that person a hero. After they finish writing they can draw a picture to go along with it.
I HAVE A DREAM

by __________

I have a dream____________________________________

__________________________________________________

__________________________________________________

__________________________________________________

__________________________________________________

__________________________________________________

__________________________________________________

__________________________________________________

__________________________________________________
FRIENDSHIP

Students will learn there are multiple ways to extend their friendship to others. It is important to be accepting of all cultures and be able to develop friendships with anyone. Friendships help create mutual understanding and respect for each other (these things in turn helping to create a classroom community). There are many types of friendships and there are many ways to be a friend.
Reaching Out to Those in Need

Theme: Friendship

Book: Boxes for Katje by Candace Fleming (American/Dutch)

Key Concepts:
- Friendship can reach faraway places.
- Value what you have and find ways to help others.

Key Questions:
- What is the difference between a want and a need?
- How can you help others in need?

Activity:

Task One
Opening – Ask students what wants are and what needs are. Make a two column list of their answers on the board.

Task Two
Read to the class Boxes for Katje by Candace Fleming. After the story, discuss the following questions as a class: How did Katje and Rosie form a friendship? What were some of the hardships the people in Holland faced after World War II? What were some of the things that Katje received? Were the items more wants or needs?

Task Three
Propose to the students a way in which they can help those in need. One idea is helping Operation International Children. It is an organization that collects school supplies for the children that our troops serve. More information can be found at http://www.operationiraqichildren.org. Students can also set up a coin drive to raise money for shipping the school supplies. As a class, have the students brainstorm ways they can get other people to participate in donating school supplies and raising money.

Task Four
Have the students compose a friendly letter using the correct format – heading, greeting, body, and closing. Review the sections of a letter beforehand if needed. The letters will be sent with the school supplies. Students can write a letter to the soldiers who will deliver the packages or to the children in Iraq who will receive the school supplies. By providing a self addressed stamped envelope, students can expect a letter back written by a soldier or a student.
Looking Past Differences in Making Friends

Theme: Friendship

Book: *The Other Side* by Jacqueline Woodson (African/European)

Key Concepts:
- Segregation laws were put in place to systematically separate the races of the whites and African Americans.
- Friendships look beyond skin color.

Key Questions:
- How can you make friends?
- What are friendships based on?

Activity:

Task One
Opening – Have students make predictions regarding what the story is going to be about based on the title and book cover. Ask students what they know about segregation laws that existed in the past. Then provide them with further background information on segregation.

Task Two
Read to the class *The Other Side* by Jacqueline Woodson. Discuss the following questions with students: Why were the girls not supposed to go to the other side of the fence? What did the fence represent in the story? Why do you think Clover’s mom did not tell her to get off the fence? What was the author’s message when she ended the story by saying that someday somebody is going to knock the fence down? In the story, Clover and Annie slowly became friends. Ask the students what are some ways they use to make friends and why it is important to be accepting of everybody.

Task Three
In this part of the lesson, students can learn to appreciate the people in their class. Place all students’ names in a jar. Students then take turns picking a name out of a jar. Explain to them that the name they picked is going to be their secret friend for the next couple of days. Students will be writing and responding to letters to/from their secret friend. The letters could be on what makes their friend special, what they admire about their friend, what they want to learn about their friend. You will deliver the mail to their mailboxes.
Task Four
On the last day, students reveal who their secret friend was. Discuss with the students how it felt having a secret friend and what they learned about their secret friend from doing this activity.

*An ongoing activity that the class can do is having a compliment jar. Whenever a student wants to acknowledge something that another student did they write it down on a small piece of paper and place it into a jar. You can read them at the end of class.
Guidelines in Analyzing Children’s Books

Many books on the market can be considered multicultural. Even with the influx of multicultural titles some choices are better than others. In order to choose quality multicultural literature, consider several factors. The Council on Interracial Books for Children created guidelines in 1974 to analyze children’s books for racism (and sexism). The following guidelines can also be used to gauge the appropriateness and value of multicultural books:

1) Check the illustrations for stereotypes and tokenism. See if the minorities are the active doers or if they only have submissive roles.

2) Check the story line. What is the standard for success and how are problems resolved?

3) Look at the lifestyles. Do the minorities live away from white suburbia? Are other cultures accurately and properly depicted?

4) Weigh the relationships among people. What ethnicity holds the power?

5) Note the heroes and whose interest they are serving.

6) Consider the story’s possible effects on a child’s self-image and if there is a character with whom they can positively identify.

7) Think about the author’s and illustrator’s perspective and decide if the minority cultural perspectives are respected.

8) Watch for racist loaded words when the story’s describing minority characters.
9) Look at the copyright date since children’s books did not commonly reflect multiracial society until the 1970’s.

10) Consider literacy, historical, and cultural perspectives and determine the context.
Suggested Bibliography of Multicultural Children’s Literature

It has been already established that students will benefit from being exposed to books from different cultures including their own (Colby & Lyon, 2004; Wan, 2006; Jetton & Savage-Davis, 2005). The following is a list of books that teachers can utilize in the classroom which further introduce multicultural literature to their students. The titles of books are grouped according to theme and under each theme they are then grouped by culture. The books can be used in place of some of those used in the lessons if the teacher feels that they are more reflective of the students in their classroom. There is a multitude of other books that teachers can find on the market as well.
SELF IDENTITY/FAMILY

Multicultural
The Skin You Live In by Michael Tyler
Whoever You Are by Mem Fox
All Kinds of Families! by Mary Ann Hoberman
All Families Are Special by Norma Simon
The Family Book by Todd Parr

African American
No Mush Today by Sally Derby
I Love My Hair! by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley
I Like Myself! by Karen Beaumont
Momma, Where Are You From? by Marie Bradby

Latino
Grandma’s Records by Eric Velasquez (Puerto Rican)
Grandma’s Gift by Eric Velasquez (Puerto Rican)
In My Family by Carmen Lomas Garza (Mexican)
My Dairy from Here to There by Amada Irma Perez (Mexican)
Hairs/Pelitos by Sandra Cisneros
Too Many Tamales by Gary Soto

Asian
Grandfather’s Journey by Allen Say (Japanese)
The Lotus Seed by Sherry Garland (Vietnamese)
The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi (Korean)
Good-Bye, 382 Shin Dang Dong by Frances Park (Korean)
Grandfather Counts by (Chinese)
Going Home, Coming Home by Truong Tran (Vietnamese)

Native American
Gift Horse: A Lakota Story by S.D. Nelson
A Boy Called Slow by Joseph Bruchac
Indian Shoes by Cynthia Leitich Smith (Seminole-Cherokee)
When the Shadbush Blooms by Carla Messinger (Lenape)

Middle Eastern
The Stars in My Geddoh’s Sky by Clair Sidhom Matze
Caravan by Lawrence McKay Jr. (Afghani)
Sitti’s Secrets by Nomi Shih (Palestinian)
European
Now One Foot, Now the Other by Tomie dePaola
The Memory String by Eve Bunting
A Wednesday Surprise by Eve Bunting

Jewish
A is for Abraham: A Jewish Family Alphabet book by Richard Michelson
Jalapeno Bagels by Natasha Wing (Jewish/Mexican)
The Keeping Quilt by Patricia Polacco
The Brother’s Promise by Francis Harber

FOLKTALES AND FAIRYTALES

African American
Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe
Pretty Salma: A Little Red Riding Hood Story from Africa by Niki Daly
Zomo the Rabbit: A Trickster Tale from West Africa by Gerald McDermott
Anansi the Spider: A Tale from the Ashanti by Gerald McDermott
Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People’s Ears by Verna Aardema

Latino
Domitila: A Cinderella Tale from the Mexican Tradition by Jewell Reinhart Coburn
Adelita by Tomie dePaola (Mexican)
Conejito: A Folktale from Panama by Margaret Read McDonald
The Legend of the Poinsettia by Tomie dePaola (Mexican)
Moon Rope by Lois Ehlert (Peruvian)
The Legend of the Hummingbird: A Tale from Puerto Rico by Michael Rose Ramirez

Asian
Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China by Ai-Ling Louie
Lon Po-Po: A Red Riding Hood Story from China by Ed Young
Angkat: The Cambodian Cinderella by Jewell Reinhart Coburn
Abadeha: A Philippine Cinderella by Myrna J. De LA Paz
Anklet for a Princess: A Cinderella Story from India by Meredith Babeaux Brucker
The Dragon Prince: A Chinese Beauty and the Beast Tale by Lawrence Yep
The Drum: A Folktale from India by Rob Cleveland
The Green Frogs: A Korean Folktale by Yumi Heo
Go to Sleep Gecko: A Balinese Folktale by Margaret Read McDonald
How Tiger Got His Stripes by Rob Cleveland (Vietnamese)
Brother Rabbit: A Cambodian Tale by Minfong Ho

Native American
The Rough-Faced Girl by Rafe Martin
Sootface: An Ojibwa Cinderella Story by Robert D. San Souci
How the Stars Fell into the Sky by Jerrie Oughton (Navajo)
Coyote: A Trickster Tale from the Pacific Southwest by Gerald McDermott
Between Earth & Sky: Legends of Native American Sacred Places by Joseph Bruchac
The Legend of Bluebonnet by Tomie dePaola (Comanche)
The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush by Tomie dePaola
The Golden Flower: A Taino Myth from Puerto Rico by Nina Jaffe

Middle Eastern
The Egyptian Cinderella by Shirley Climo
The Golden Sandal: A Middle Eastern Cinderella Story by Rebecca Hickox
The Magic Apple: A Folktales from the Middle East by Rob Cleveland
Tunjur! Tunjur! Tunjur!: A Palestinian Folktale by Margaret Read McDonald
Joha Makes a Wish: A Middle Eastern Tale by Eric A. Kimmel
The Legend of the Persian Carpet by Tomie dePaola

European
Papa Gatto: An Italian Fairy Tale by Ruth Sanderson
Fat Cat: A Danish Folktales by Margaret Read McDonald
Slop: A Welsh Folktale by Margaret Read McDonald
The Man Who Spoke with Cats: A Scottish Folktale by T.E. Watson
Glen Robbie: A Scottish Fairy Tale by T.E. Watson
The Clown of God by Tomie dePaola (French)
Tim O’Toole and the Wee Folk by Earld McDermott (Irish)
Three Little Cajun Pigs by Mike Artell
The Magic Nesting Doll by Jacqueline K. Ogburn (Russian)
The Irish Cinderlad by Shirley Climo

Jewish
Gathering Sparks by Howard Schwartz
The Magic Pomegranate: A Jewish Folktales by Peninnah Schram
The Sabbath Lion: A Jewish Folktale from Algeria by Howard Schwartz and Barbara Rush
The Way Meat Loves Salt: A Cinderella Tale of the Jewish Tradition by Nina Jaffe

CULTURAL TRADITIONS

African American
The Sounds of Kwanzaa by Dimitreia Tokunbo
Seven Spools of Thread: A Kwanzaa Story by Angela Shelf Medearis
Li’l Rabbit’s Kwanzaa by Donna L. Washington
K is for Kwanzaa: A Kwanzaa Alphabet Book by Juwanda G. Ford
**Latino**
The Night of Los Posadas by Tomie dePaola
Hanukkah Moon by Deborah da Costa (Mexican/Jewish)
The Festival of Bones by Luis San Vicente (Mexican)
Cinco de Mouse-O! by Judy Cox (Mexican)
Abuela’s Weave by Omar S. Castaneda (Guatemalan)
Book Fiesta!: Celebrate Children's Day/Book Day by Pat Mora (Mexican)

**Asian**
Ten Mice for Tet by Pegi Deitz Shea and Cynthia Weill (Vietnamese)
Bon Odori Dancer by Karen Kawamoto McCoy (Japanese)
Butterflies for Kiri by Cathryn Falwell (Japanese)
Lin Yi’s Lantern by Brenda Williams (Chinese)

**Native American**
The Give-Away: A Christmas Story in the Native American Tradition by Ray Buckley
Grandmother’s Dreamcatchers by Becky Ray McCain (Chippewa)
Jingle Dancer by Cynthia Leitch Smith (Muscogee)
Thanks to the Animals by Allen Sockabasin (Passamaquoddy)

**Middle Eastern**
Under the Ramadan Moon by Sylvia Whitman (Muslim)
The Best Eid Ever by Asma Mobin-Uddin (Muslim)
A Party in Ramadan by Asma Mobin-Uddin (Muslim)
Night of the Moon: A Muslim Holiday Story by Hena Kahn

**European**
St. Patrick’s Day Alphabet by Beverly Vidrine (Irish)
St. Patrick’s Day by Gail Gibbons (Irish)
Gaston Goes to Mardi Gras by (Cajun)

**Jewish**
The Borrowed Hanukkah Latkes by Linda Glasar
Cakes and Miracles: A Purim Tale by Barbara Diamond Goldin
Grandma’s Latkes by Malka Drucker
The Yankee at the Seder by Elka Weber
Nachson, Who Was Afraid to Swim: A Passover Story by Deborah Bodin Cohen

**INJUSTICE**

**African American**
Henry’s Freedom Box by Ellen Levine
Rosa by Nikki Giovanni
Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt by Deborah Hopkinson
Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit-Ins by Carole Boston Weatherford
The Story of Ruby Bridges by Robert Coles
Selavi, That is Life: A Haitian Story of Hope by Youme Landowne
Goin’ Someplace Special by Patricia C. McKissack

**Latino**
Armando and the Blue Tarp School by Edith Hope Fine and Judith Pinkerton Josephson (Mexican)
My Shoes and I by Rene Colato Lainez (El Salvadorian)
From North to South by Rene Colato Lainez (Mexican)
Waiting for Papa by Rene Colato Lainez (El Salvadorian)

**Asian**
So Far From the Sea by Eve Bunting (Japanese)
Baseball Saved Us by Ken Mochizuki (Japanese)
Coolies by Yin (Chinese)
Landed by Milly Lee (Chinese)
Mali: Under the Night Sky: A Lao Story of Home by Youme Landowne

**Native American**
Encounter by Jane Yolen (Taino)
Home to Medicine Mountain by Chiori Santiago

**Middle Eastern**
The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq by Jeanette Winter
Silent Music by James Rumford (Baghdadi)
Nareen’s Secret School: A Story from Afghanistan by Jeanette Winter
Ziba Came on a Boat by Liz Lofthouse (Afghani)
The Roses in My Carpet by Rukhsana Khan (Afghani)

**Jewish**
Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust by Eve Bunting
The Butterfly by Patricia Polacco
As Good as Anybody: Martin Luther King and Abraham Joshua Heschel’s Amazing March Toward Freedom by Richard Michelson

**FRIENDSHIP**
Smokey Night by Eve Bunting (African American/Asian)
Brianna, Jamaica, and the Dance of Spring by Juanita Havill (African American/Asian)
Teammates by Peter Golenbock (African American/European)
One Green Apple by Eve Bunting (Middle Eastern/European)
Snow in Jerusalem by Deborah da Costa (Jewish/Muslim)
Boxes for Katje by Candace Fleming (American/Dutch)
Pink and Say by Patricia Polacco (African American/European)
Crossing Bok Chitto: A Choctaw Tale of Friendship & Freedom by Tim Tingle
(Native American/African American)
REFERENCES


