BRINGING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION TO FIRST GRADE STUDENTS IN CALIFORNIA

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BRINGING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION TO FIRST GRADE STUDENTS IN CALIFORNIA

A Project

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Abstract

of

BRINGING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION TO FIRST GRADE STUDENTS IN CALIFORNIA

by

Sarah Leann Burner

I designed this project based on my experiences and knowledge in working in elementary schools, and I have created a curriculum guide that is focused on California first grade classrooms. My curriculum guide offers strategies to implement multicultural education and have students and teachers become more culturally aware. The significance of having multicultural education in our classrooms is to have curriculum that is relatable to students and their cultures, and my guide focuses on bringing in multicultural literature into the classroom. There are thirteen different themes in my guide and each theme has multicultural literature that focuses on that theme. This will encourage more student involvement, further communication among students, and bring a sense of community to the classroom.
Multicultural education changes the classroom environment in a positive way, having students come together and learn about each other. With diversity growing, schools and teachers need to be able to find ways to teach multicultural education in their classrooms. With mandated curriculum and teaching to the state standards, teachers are pushed to teach to the test at the end of the school year. If teachers can bring in multicultural education and teach with the students interests, students will become more involved and want to learn. My curriculum guide is designed to teach culture to first grade students for them to understand more about themselves and each other. In first grade, students are becoming more socially aware and learning about each other, and I want my students to learn about culture and become more culturally aware.

____________________, Committee Chair

Mimi Coughlin, Ph.D.

_______________

Date
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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

In California, the Student Racial and Ethnic Makeup for the 2008-2009 school year is 49.02% Hispanic, 7.27% African American, 2.69% Filipino, 8.42% Asian and 27.86% White (not Hispanic). Can you imagine what our classrooms look like with such diversity present in our classrooms? There is such a vast diverse population present in the California schools, and it is continually changing each year. In Figure 1, I have two different charts from the California Department of Education website that shows the difference in ten years among the demographics with students. These two charts show the increase of diversity that is occurring in our classrooms. In looking at the statistics of the students, it is clear that teachers will encounter diverse classrooms.

This curriculum guide for California first grade students will further students’ individual and cultural knowledge. Students will be able to ask questions and be able to look at perspectives other than their own. The goal of multicultural education in the classroom is to create a more “flexible, customizable content, assignments and activities that are accessible and applicable to students with a variety of backgrounds, learning styles, abilities and disabilities” (Bruch, Jehangir, Jacobs, & Ghere, 2004, p. 14).

Purpose of the Project

There are too many students’ who have “felt like strangers to the classroom because the curriculum had nothing to do with their lives” (Bruch et al., 2004, p. 18). It is important to establish multiculturalism in today’s curriculum because in classrooms, there are a wide variety of cultures, and it is important for students and teachers to
develop an understanding of new cultures. The significance and purpose of this project is to understand exactly what multicultural education is, how it can be implemented in an elementary school classroom, and what a teacher can do to make sure that all students are receiving an equal education.

This guide can also be implemented for student teachers who are learning about the foundations of becoming a teacher, and can use this guide to help them discover how to use multicultural education in their student teaching and future classrooms. The demographics of this nation are continually changing and growing, and maintaining a current curriculum with the current trends is important for the students and teachers.

**Statement of the Problem**

“As public schools in California and across the nation become increasingly diverse, the most pernicious and challenging education issue of our time is the academic achievement gap” (“Closing the achievement gap achieving success for all students”, 2007, para. 2). Many students are coming from different cultural backgrounds, so English might not be their first language, and their academic performance might not be where it should. With so many different cultures present in our classrooms, teachers need to understand what multicultural education is and how they can incorporate this into their curriculum.

First grade language arts requires learning phonics, blending, writing, spelling and developing the knowledge base for comprehension and reading skills, which are the English-Language Arts Content Standards for the state of California (California State Board of Education, 1997). In taking these skills and applying them to multicultural
education and in getting students more involved with learning, teachers are also teaching students about cultural heritage and cultural background. This project will bring multicultural education into first grade language arts and use the curriculum guide to develop and incorporate more activities in the classroom.

According to Banks and McGee Banks (2010), the main factors that have been slowing multicultural education and curriculum in the schools include ideological resistance, lack of teacher knowledge of ethnic groups, heavy reliance of teachers on textbooks, and focus on high stakes testing and accountability (Banks & McGee Banks, 2010). There could be resistance to multicultural education in schools because there are some teachers who are not open to change in the curriculum and classroom settings.

With diversity in the classroom becoming more present in our classrooms, there are many different ethnicities. “In a state with 6.3 million public school students – nearly half of whom are Hispanic, 25 percent still learning the English language and 40 percent struggling against poverty – closing the achievement gap is essential to a secure future” (Jung, November 13, 2007, para. 4). Each ethnicity needs to be addressed by the teacher, by checking to see what religious and cultural beliefs that student believes in. In developing these cultural understandings, teachers and educators will be able to use more multicultural education in the classroom by having the students learn about their classmates. There is also a heavy reliance on textbooks by teachers because of the strong focus on state testing and meeting the standards.

In addressing different cultures, one is also teaching acceptance and understanding. What is multicultural education? Is multiculturalism presented in the
lesson in the teacher’s manual? These are two questions that teachers need to answer, and by using the curriculum guide, teachers will answer these questions and be able to teach multicultural education. Today’s student teachers need to learn what multicultural education is and implement this into the curriculum. Student teachers might not be getting this in their classes, and using the guide will show how to teach multicultural education in their classrooms.

**Significance of the Project**

“We are teaching the whole child, not teaching in a vacuum” (Kopkowski, 2006, p. 2). With multicultural education in the classroom, teachers and students will learn more about each other. In turn, this will develop more skills and bring in different experiences from which all the students and teachers can learn. In creating a multicultural curriculum focusing on language arts in a first grade classroom, teachers will further enrich each student’s abilities, knowledge and culture. A curriculum that is relatable to students and their cultures will encourage more student involvement, will further communication among students, and will bring a sense of community to the classroom. Multicultural education changes the classroom environment in a positive way, having students come together and learn about each other. The curriculum guide being used is designed for first grade students but could be developed and changed for other grades to use.

Using the curriculum guide for teachers will give teachers ideas on ways to bring multicultural education and activities into their classrooms. Teachers will still use the language arts curriculum provided by their school districts, but will also incorporate the
curriculum guide to enhance multiculturalism, which is lacking in many classrooms today. With more multicultural activities and literature present in the classroom, students and teachers will become better learners and will come together as a community. “In order to move toward a healthy multicultural society, the educator must see self as a learner enhanced and changed by understanding, appreciating, and reflecting cultural diversity” (Cross & Stiles, 1977, p. 10).

The Researcher

I have worked as a substitute teacher in California for two years, working in Title One and low-income schools. I am Caucasian, in my late twenties and middle class. I have a Bachelor of Arts from San Francisco State University, and I received my Multiple Subject Teaching Credential from Sacramento State in the Urban Teacher Education Center. While working in these elementary schools, from Kindergarten through Sixth Grade, I have taught a variety of lessons. I have seen a majority of the curriculum being taught that does not use multicultural education. The school districts that I have worked in are made up of diverse ethnic populations and the curriculum being used is missing that cultural awareness that is needed in our schools. I want to bring in my experience and hope to share my knowledge of multicultural education with other teachers.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation on using a curriculum guide in implementing multicultural education in first grade language arts is that there are teachers who don’t want to teach
multicultural education and who are not open to using a guide. Some teachers are set in their ways and do not welcome change. Another limitation is time constraints, because there is so much that has to be taught during the school day that finding the time to incorporate multicultural education not already in the teacher manual can be difficult. There is so much pressure on teachers to teach only to the standards, and to prepare students for the big tests at the end of the year, that the curriculum guide could be seen as a deterrent.

With so many cultures present in our classrooms, students want to read and be involved in activities that teach them about different cultures; they want to learn more than just the required material that might not suit their interests. Multicultural education is necessary in today’s classrooms, and by using the curriculum guide, teachers will be expanding their knowledge base and making themselves better learners and leaders.

**Definition of Terms**

**Achievement Gap:** the difference in academic performance between different ethnic groups. In California, the gap is defined as the disparity between White students and other ethnic groups and between English learners and native English speakers, socioeconomically disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged, and students with disabilities as compared to students without disabilities.

http://www.closingtheachievementgap.org/cs/ctag/print/htdocs/about.htm

**Culture:** the totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought characteristics of a community or a population (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2009, p. 454).
Culturally Responsive Teaching: using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of these students (Gay, 2000, p. 29).


Diversity: 1) the condition of being DIVERSE: VARIETY; especially: the inclusion of DIVERSE people (as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization. Programs intended to promote diversity in schools. 2) an instance of being DIVERSE (Merriam Webster, 2010).

Ethnicity: is culturally defined according to the knowledge, beliefs, and behavior patterns shared by a group of people with the same history and perhaps the same language (Cushner et al., 2009, p. 454).

Multicultural: refers to responses to cultural differences that are intellectually honest in their recognition of existing cultural diversity (Cross & Stiles, 1977, p. 14).

Multiculturalism: a philosophical position and movement that assumes that the gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society should be reflected in all of the institutionalized structures of educational institutions, including the staff, the norms and values, the curriculum, and the student body (Banks & McGee Banks, 2010, p. 447).

Multicultural education: an education that is designed and shaped by several cultural perspectives (Cushner et al., 2009, p. 456).
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

What is multicultural education? Multicultural education is defined as, “An education that is designed and shaped by several cultural perspectives” (Cushner,
McClelland, & Safford, 2009, p. 456). Educators need to have an understanding of learning about multicultural education and to use this tool to help them learn how to use multicultural education. Although there are some districts with mandated curriculum, teachers should use a curriculum guide to develop and guide lessons that demonstrate an interest in the student’s background, culture and interests.

“Lessons and activities designed to meet this purpose should help students understand their own biases and view others with respect regardless of race, color, religion, sex, disability, age, national origin, or citizenship status” (Department of Curriculum and Learning, 1998, p. 1).

It is important for teachers and students to understand their biases and how they view others. Although students may not be aware of their own biases against others, students need to learn that there are different cultures, and it is important for these students to learn acceptance and become more culturally aware. Multicultural education is helpful in having the students and teachers develop cultural awareness and tolerance. The purpose of the multicultural lessons and activities are for students and teachers to start including social justice and equality in the classrooms.

The first section of Chapter 2 will look at the goals of multicultural education and why it is important in today’s classrooms. The next sections include becoming a culturally responsive teacher, the use of cooperative learning and multicultural literature in the classroom, four approaches in integrating multicultural education, integrating social studies with language arts curriculum, state standards, resistance to multicultural education and, finally, a conclusion on achieving multicultural education.
**Goals of Multicultural Education**

Multicultural education has become more prevalent since the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s (Banks & McGee Banks, 2010). The objective of the Civil Rights Movement was to terminate the discrimination found in the institutional settings of socialization such as segregated schools, housing, and employment.

The consequences of the Civil Rights Movement had a significant influence on educational institutions as ethnic groups—first African Americans and then other groups—demanded that the schools and other educational institutions reform curricula to reflect their experiences, histories, cultures, and perspectives (Banks & McGee Banks, 2010, p. 6).

After the Civil Rights Movement, students of multiple cultures were sharing the same classroom, but teachers were still White and middle class. There was a push to differentiate the cultural backgrounds of teachers and integrate multiculturalism into the curriculum. While teachers are still mostly of White and middle class background, this is when multicultural education needs to brought into the classroom and teaches teachers how to become culturally relevant teachers.

One of the goals of multicultural education is providing students with cultural and ethnic alternatives (Banks, 2002). For many years, school curriculum has concentrated on Anglo-American culture, history, and perspectives. Students of different cultural backgrounds are neither learning nor experiencing their own cultural heritage in the classroom. This can be a setback for students, because educators concentrate solely on what students need to learn, not on students’ backgrounds and culture. If educators teach
multicultural education, students will attain the information and the skills needed to become better learners and active members in their communities. The main goal of multicultural education is to provide all students with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge needed within their own ethnic culture, the mainstream culture and with other ethnic cultures (Banks, 2002). One of the reasons multicultural education is essential in our classrooms is that there are a variety of cultures present in today’s classrooms.

**Becoming a Culturally Responsive Teacher**

These are two quotations from different teachers on their feelings about the low-income Latino and Black children who started going to their schools; these are the type of quotes that educators do not want to hear and that are hurtful to students. “These kids don’t value education, and their parents aren’t helping either. They don’t seem to care about their children’s future.” The other quote states: “Students who are coming here now don’t have much respect for authority. That’s why we have so many discipline problems” (Howard, 2008, p. 136). However, not all educators or parents harbor negative feelings about the schools’ new demographics. As one educator stated, “When I first found myself teaching classes of mostly Black kids, I went home frustrated every night because I knew I wasn’t getting through . . . only started getting better when I finally figured out that I had to re-examine everything I was doing” (Howard, p. 136). Because schools are rapidly changing demographically, teachers who re-examine teaching strategies to reach their students and to understand their students better will be successful and make a difference.
In the article, *As Diversity Grows, So Must We*, Howard has five phases that help educators in diversity-enhanced schools transform themselves and their schools to help serve their students better. Since 90 percent of teachers are White and come from middle class backgrounds, they have not acquired the educational background that would prepare them for the changing and growing diversity of their students (Howard, 2008).

The first phase: Building Trust, entails acknowledging the challenges in a positive and honest way for educators of all racial and cultural groups to develop new competencies and pedagogies to engage the ever-changing students. Howard states that school leaders should base their initial discussions on the following:

- Inequities in diverse schools are not, for the most part, a function of intentional discrimination.
- Educators of all racial and cultural groups need to develop new competencies and pedagogies to successfully engage our changing populations.
- White teachers have their own cultural connections and unique personal narratives that are legitimate aspects of the overall mix of school diversity.

The second phase, Engaging Personal Culture, is where the central aim of the work builds educators’ *cultural competence*—their ability to form authentic and effective relationships across differences. With cultural competence, educators can start building relationships with their students, parents, and the community. Having parents and the community involved with the school and in the classroom can create a stronger classroom and build unity with the students.
In the third phase: Confronting Social Dominance and Social Justice, “educators directly confront the current and historical inequities that affect education. The central purpose of this phase is to construct a compelling narrative of social justice that will inform, inspire, and sustain educators in their work, without falling into rhetoric of shame and blame” (Howard, p. 137).

In the fourth phase, Transforming Instructional Practices, schools are to assess and transform the way they carry out instruction to become more responsive to diversity. “As educators in rapidly transitioning schools, we need to reexamine everything we’re doing” (Howard, p. 138). This way, teachers are not relying on textbooks and scripted curriculum, but are bringing in outside sources and culturally relevant material for the students.

The last phase, Engaging the Entire School Community, encourages the schools to engage the community by welcoming diverse students and their families by having the school leaders engage the entire school community. These five phases need to be implemented in schools all over because they provide the professional development that educators lack and, as a result, will help them become better teachers in diverse classrooms.

After an educator has developed a strong understanding of culture and multiculturalism, the next necessary step is learning to be a culturally responsive teacher. Successfully teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds—especially students from historically marginalized groups—involves more than just applying specialized teaching techniques. It demands a
new way of looking at teaching that is grounded in an understanding of the role of culture and language in learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2008, p. 204).

One of the first characteristics that a culturally responsive teacher must develop is a socio-culturally conscious outlook, and an understanding that an individual’s way of thinking, social class, language, race, ethnicity and gender influence behaving and being. In addition, teachers must confront any negative attitudes that they might have toward any cultural group so this does not affect the classroom. Not everyone is open to certain cultural groups and can be prejudiced, and it is the responsibility of the teacher to make sure that prejudices are left out of the classroom and that all of the cultural groups are given equal treatment.

All “culturally responsive teachers are warm, supportive, personable, patient, understanding, enthusiastic, flexible, and stay on task” (Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997, p. 47). Culturally responsive teachers respect all cultural differences. The demonstration of this respect will significantly affect their teaching, learning, and their beliefs in themselves. By having this positive attitude towards students’ cultural differences, educators will make the classrooms and students more positive. Students are more positive when they are more actively involved in learning, participating in school activities, and getting along with other students and staff.

 Teachers will most likely send an English learner to an English Language Learner (ELL) room instead of critically thinking about how an English learner can receive instruction in a regular classroom (Gatimu, 2009). Teachers need to understand that
students will learn more by being in a regular classroom and learn from students in their classroom.

Another characteristic of being a culturally responsive teacher is to provide all teachers the support and commitment to bring multicultural education into the classroom. In addition, these teachers need to show their students that they are capable of learning and using scaffolding to help the students.

The last three characteristics of a culturally responsive teacher are learning about their students’ past experiences, their homes and the community where the students live as well as knowing about their students’ interests in school and outside of school. This can help build relationships with the students and show that they care. “Caring teachers listen and are responsive” (Noddings, 2006, p. 341). By using culturally responsive teaching strategies, there is a support of knowledge, teaching, and learning using the constructivist view. “As teachers assist students to construct knowledge, build on their personal and cultural strengths, and examine the curriculum from multiple perspectives, an inclusive classroom environment is created” (Kea, Campbell-Whatley, & Richards, 2006, p. 6).

Teachers need to hold the same high expectations in their classrooms regardless of their students’ ethnicity, race or culture. In the Castagno article, Ladson-Billing offers the following theory:

Culturally relevant pedagogy has as its foundation three elements: academic achievement, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. All students are held to high expectations for academic success, and teachers are called upon to
provide the circumstances under which children can maintain or develop (1) cultural competence in both their own and the mainstream culture, and (2) the awareness and skills needed to be critical consumers and agents of change in our society (Castagno, 2009, p. 47).

A teacher should never underestimate any student’s ability to learn. Instead, educators should motivate their students to achieve their very best in the classroom. By paying attention to many different cultures, students will learn more about each other and provide a positive classroom experience not just for themselves, but also in their community’s culture.

As culturally responsive teachers who understand and respect their students’ cultural identity, teachers can now find ways to integrate many different cultures into the classroom, developing lessons and activities that revolve around culture.

In an article about cultural pedagogy, written by Souto-Manning (2009), a first grade teacher describes how students are noticing that only certain students are being pulled out of class for Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), Resource Specialist Program (RSP), or other services. These first graders are wondering why only those kids are pulled out of class and why they are not. The students did not think it was necessary to pull out students, but that all the students should stay in the class together.

The teacher decided to start bringing in multicultural texts that would be read to the students and then discuss the texts altogether. The teacher was able to arrange for the students’ aides -- who were pulling the students out -- to join them in the classroom
instead. In addition, by learning from the multicultural texts, all of the students were becoming more actively involved in the discussion of the readings.

I sought to challenge the banking model of education in which knowledge is deposited into students’ brains as money into a bank, recognizing home literacies and prior experiences and knowledge. In doing so, I sought to look closely at critical dialogue . . . which had the potential to transform and create relationships (Souto-Manning, 2009, p. 53).

The author feels that teachers need to supplement textbooks and teacher manuals. For example, the author read texts about Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks, allowing the children to discuss what they read and learned. “Multicultural education can help instructors legitimately use a variety of teaching methods and an expanded array of assessment methods so that students can learn more effectively and their comprehension of content can be evaluated more accurately” (Bruch, Jehangir, Jacobs, & Ghere, 2004, p. 13).

**The Use of Cooperative Learning and Multicultural Literature in the Classroom**

Cooperative learning is an effective strategy for all cultural groups as a main strategy in a culturally compatible classroom (Shade et al., 1997). This teaching strategy allows students to work in groups and work face-to-face with other students. In addition, students are using social skills and taking individual accountability in the classroom. “For example, cooperative group discussions are used to sharpen student thinking and language skills. Teachers engage students in active exploration of real-life phenomena
and encourage them to test their observation and conclusions” (Shade et al., 1997, p. 116).

Culturally responsive teachers can use effective teaching strategies such as Think-Pair-Share and Cooperative Learning in the classroom. Think-Pair-Share requires the students to think quietly for about ten seconds; then pair with a neighbor to discuss the question posted from the teacher, and then allows the students to share (McTighe & Lyman, 1988). This teaching strategy requires students to work with different children and provides different levels of participation.

In multicultural classrooms, students need to include multiculturalism in their literature. “Multicultural literature offers opportunities for personal reflection and identification with many cultures. For example, a sixth grade language arts teacher might select Gary Soto’s *Taking Sides* to promote a discussion of cultural identity” (Castagno, 1995, p. 2). Reading is an integral part of the curriculum, and in using multicultural literature, teachers can act as models and guides, making the classroom an arena for open exchange. Encouraging discussions permits students to read, think, and become actively engaged with the literature (Dietrich & Ralph, 1995).

Teachers need to find multicultural texts that are not stereotypical. For example, reading a Native American children’s book in which the Native Americans are wearing headdresses, using bows and arrows, and dancing around a fire reinforces stereotypical views of the Native American culture, and does not represent the culture accurately. Multicultural literature can be the first opportunity to open dialogues.
The literary work becomes the shared body of experience, allowing students to respond from the perspectives of their individual cultural backgrounds. The teacher uses thought-provoking questions to enhance students’ connections to the literature and to establish a relationship of cultural equality between students and teacher (Dietrich & Ralph, 1995, p. 2).

**Four Approaches in Integrating Multicultural Education**

Banks offers four approaches to integrating multicultural education into the curriculum: The Contributions Approach, the Additive Approach, the Transformation Approach and the Social Action Approach (see Appendix A). Banks describes each of the approaches by placing each approach on a leveling system. Level One is described as an easier approach, and each subsequent level becomes more challenging. The Contributions Approach, Level One, is when schools or districts are first attempting to incorporate multicultural education into the curriculum. “The contributions approach is characterized by the insertion of ethnic heroes/heroines and discrete cultural artifacts into the curriculum, selected using criteria similar to those used to select mainstream heroes/heroines and cultural artifacts” (Banks & McGee Banks, 2010, p. 237). Banks also states that the Contributions Approach is the easiest approach for teachers to use when it comes to integrating multicultural education into the curriculum.

The Additive Approach is Level Two on Banks’ scale, and is accomplished by adding a book, a unit, or a course to the curriculum without changing it considerably. An example is bringing in multicultural literature or cultural artwork that follows the curriculum, but is also culturally relevant. “The additive approach allows the teacher to
put ethnic content into the curriculum without restructuring it, a process that would take substantial time, effort, and training as well as a rethinking of the curriculum and its purposes, nature, and goals” (Banks & McGee Banks, 2010, p. 240).

The Transformation Approach, Level Three, differs from the first two approaches. The first two approaches involve adding ethnic content to the mainstream curriculum without changing the fundamental assumptions, nature, and the structure. “The transformation approach changes the basic assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from several perspectives from which problems, concepts, and issues are viewed” (Banks & McGee Banks, 2010, p. 242).

The last approach in Banks’ Four Levels of Integration of Ethnic Content is the Social Action Approach, Level Four

The social action approach includes all elements of the transformation approach but adds components that require students to make decisions and take actions related to the concept, issue, or problem studied in the unit. Major goals of instruction in this approach are to educate students for social criticism and social change and to teach them decision-making skills. To empower students and help them acquire political efficacy, the school must help them become reflective social critics and skilled participants in social change. The traditional goal of schooling has been socialize students so they would accept unquestioningly the existing ideologies, institutions, and practices within society and the nation-state (Banks & McGee Banks, 2010).
Integrating Social Studies with Language Arts Curriculum

Social Studies is designed to teach students about the history of social, economic, and political problems. According the Social Science Framework for California Public Schools (2001), students need to develop goals of knowledge and cultural understanding, goals of democratic understanding and civic values, and goals of skills attainment and social participation. For students to develop goals of knowledge and cultural understanding, they need to learn about cultural literacy. Students need to recognize literature and art, and learn about mythologies, legends, values, and beliefs of people. In addition, students need to take pride in their cultural heritage, develop multicultural perspectives, and recognize the relationships of various parts of a nation’s cultural life (California Department of Education, 2001).

With social studies focusing on multiculturalism, it is important to incorporate social studies with language arts. In the curriculum guide, the lessons are going to focus on the standards but bring in activities that the students will enjoy. In accordance with the standards for social studies in first grade, students will learn about the rights and individual responsibilities of citizenship, compare and contrast the absolute and relative locations of places and people, know and understand the symbols, icons, and traditions of the United States that provide continuity and a sense of community.

The last three standards are for students to compare and contrast everyday life in different times and places around the world. Students will come to recognize that some aspects of people, places, and things change over time while others stay the same; to describe the human characteristics of familiar places and the varied backgrounds of
American citizens and residents in those places, and to understand economic concepts and the role of individual choice in a free-market economy. All of these standards allow teachers to use social studies in language arts curriculum, because social studies incorporate so much multicultural education.

**California Framework and State Standards**

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has placed pressure on educators to meet the state standards and to ensure that their students do well on the standardized tests at the end of the school year. “Standards help to ensure equity and access for all. The diversity of California’s students presents both opportunities and challenges for instruction. Language and literacy growth begins before children enter school as they learn to communicate, listen to stories. . . ” (California State Board of Education, 1997, p. 2). The growth begins in Kindergarten and is developed in more depth in First Grade. First Grade language arts standards are categorized into the following segments: Reading, Writing, Written and Oral English Language Conventions and Listening and Speaking. Within each of those four main standards, there are subsections. Here is an example:

**Reading**

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Students understand the basic features of reading. They select letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics, syllabication, and word parts. They apply this knowledge to achieve fluent oral and silent reading.

*Concepts About Print*
1.1 Match oral words to printed words.

1.2 Identify the title and author of a reading selection.

1.3 Identify letters, words, and sentences.

This is only one very small section of just the English-Language Arts Standards for First Grade.

Although it is important to meet the standards, students have to know that there is more to education than just what they are required to learn. Students will be more actively involved in their education if the teaching materials relate to their cultures.

In enhancing the State Standards, teachers need lesson planning that is relevant for the multicultural classroom. For this happen, educators need to depart from the traditional subject matter and focus on broader views for the need of the classroom community (DomNwachukwu, 2008). These are the basic required elements in lesson planning in a multicultural classroom: 1) goals and objectives, 2) materials and resources, 3) anticipatory set or entry, 4) instructional input, 5) guided practice, 6) independent practice, and 7) assessment/evaluation. Using these steps will help “explore ways to integrate multicultural education into standards-based instructional planning and teaching” (DomNwachukwu, 2008, p. 183).

Resistance to Multicultural Education

The resistance to multicultural education is an attack by policy makers, parents, educators and curriculum writers who are continuing to struggle with the idea of equal
educational opportunities for all children (Graves, 1993). The idea that multicultural education is only for the minority and ethnic groups other than White has caused some problems in the multicultural education movement. Other critics of multicultural education have stated that it will “divide the nation and undercut its unity. . . The claim that multicultural education will divide the nation assumes that the nation is already united. While we are one nation, politically, sociologically, our nation is deeply divided along race, gender, sexual orientation, and class lines” (Banks, 2002, p. 7).

The resistance to multicultural education has to do with the ideology of teaching to western civilization and not reflecting on the racial and cultural diversity of our country. Eurocentrism, which is linked to western civilization, encompasses the ideas of scientific rationality, positivism, and pragmatism. “The main critique of Eurocentric perspectives is that they threaten the notion of subjectivity and critical thinking, especially when they expunge the stories, traditions, and voices of the Other” (Gatimu, 2009, p. 48). Racism has been prevalent in our society since the founding fathers and slavery. Although it is not as visually present in our society today as it once was, racism is an underlying factor that still affects cultural and ethnic groups.

According to Banks (2010), the assimilationist ideology is making it difficult for educators to think differently about how the United States culture developed and to acquire a commitment in making the curriculum multicultural. Also, Yosso (2002), argues that public schools are too often preparing students of color and low-income students to take directions without any questions, memorize without critical analysis and simultaneously upholding White privilege.
Ideological resistance is a major factor that has slowed and is still slowing the development of a multicultural curriculum, but other factors have also affected its growth and development. Political resistance to a multicultural curriculum is closely related to ideological resistance. Many people who resist a multicultural curriculum believe that knowledge is power and that a multicultural perspective on U.S. society challenges the existing power structure (Banks & McGee Banks, 2010, p. 236).

Conclusion

With NCLB and teaching to the test and standards, multicultural education is sometimes put on the back burner. If teachers are able to learn more about multicultural education and how to implement this into their curriculum without deviating from the state standards, educators and students will enjoy learning and become more actively involved.

Multicultural education lets students learn and incorporate diversity and culture in their curriculum. “Learning to look through multiple perspectives, young people may be helped to build bridges among themselves; attending to a range of human stories, they may be provoked to heal and to transform” (Greene, 1993, p. 17).

It is important that all teachers use teaching strategies that will integrate all of their students and are culturally compatible. “Educators need to help learners develop attitudes, knowledge, skills that are useful not only for smooth interpersonal and intergroup relations but for thriving on the synergy of diversity as well” (Ngai, 2004, p. 323). The students will be motivated and be interested in their education if they give the
chance to work with other students and give encouragement. If students see that teachers care about who they are in and outside of the classroom, and if teachers are active in the community, this will also create a better student response inside the classroom.

As a teacher, I need to find out students’ interests and bring those interests into the curriculum. If students see that their teacher cares about what they are interested in, then students will start becoming more actively involved and engaged in their education. Although using multicultural education and being a culturally responsive teacher are extremely important in today’s classrooms, it is important to remember that “we became teachers for reasons of the heart, animated by a passion for some subject and for helping people to learn” (Palmer, 1997, p. 19). In being a teacher, you need to have the passion to have your students excel and connect with your students. I will be able to achieve and accomplish all of these goals in teaching multicultural education by using my curriculum guide.

Chapter 3

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN FIRST GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS
The main goal of multicultural education is providing all students with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge needed within their own ethnic culture, the mainstream culture and with other cultures (Banks, 2002). In achieving this goal, teachers need to have a curriculum guide that will provide students an opportunity to learn about culture in a way that young students can fully comprehend. Although many school districts have mandated curriculum, teachers should use a curriculum guide to develop and guide lessons that demonstrate an interest in the student’s background, culture and interest.

Teachers who are culturally responsive and aware will use effective strategies to help students learn multicultural education, and teachers will have the opportunity to teach curriculum that goes beyond teaching to the standards. In order for teachers to become more culturally aware, teachers need to develop and learn how to transform themselves and make their schools better. Ninety percent of teachers are White and come from middle class backgrounds; they have not yet acquired the educational background to prepare themselves for the changing and growing diversity of their students (Howard, 2008).

Educators should use the five phases from Howard’s article, *As Diversity Grows, So Must We*. The first phase is Building Trust, which entails acknowledging the challenges in a positive and honest way for educators of all racial and cultural groups to develop new competencies and pedagogies to engage the ever-changing students.

The second phase is Engaging Personal Culture, and the central aim of the work builds educators’ *cultural competence*—their ability to form authentic and effective
relationships across differences. Teachers can have parents and the community involved with the school and in the classroom to create a stronger classroom and build unity.

The third is Confronting Social Dominance and Social Justice, where “educators directly confront the current and historical inequities that affect education. The central purpose of this phase is to construct a compelling narrative of social justice that will inform, inspire, and sustain educators in their work, without falling into rhetoric of shame and blame” (Howard, p. 137).

The fourth phase is Transforming Instructional Practices, with schools assessing and transforming the way they carry out instruction to become more responsive to diversity. The last phase, Engaging the Entire School Community, encourages the schools to engage the community by welcoming diverse students and their families, and by having the school leaders engage the entire school community. These phases provide educators with professional development and become better teachers in their diverse classrooms.

I created a unit that allows students and teachers to use activities and lessons on culture. We hear the word culture and do not fully comprehend what culture means, how to best represent different cultures, or how to teach children, especially young students, what culture is. Students need to learn what culture is because today’s classrooms are so diverse. So the next question I ask is, how can I teach my first grade students culture? I found a children’s book titled, What Is Culture? that describes culture in terms that first grade students would understand.
What Is Culture? is a children’s book written by Bobbie Kalman that describes culture for young students and is a great way to bring in multicultural education into the classroom. This book provides a gateway into introducing multicultural education and getting the teacher, students, and parents involved in learning about culture. Teachers need to look first and understand what culture is and then explain and show different cultures to children to let the students see what different cultures are in the world and in their classroom. By learning, that culture is made of different beliefs, music, dance, religion, clothing, food, history celebrations, art and sports, students will start getting a better idea of what culture is. Teachers can use this guide and base each theme on the What Is Culture? book for their classroom. The book is separated into thirteen themes:

I. Continents and countries
II. What is history?
III. The story of you
IV. Different beliefs
V. The culture of clothing
VI. Tasting culture
VII. Music and dance
VIII. Celebrating culture
IX. Sports
X. The culture of art
XI. Our multicultural world
XII. Fun with culture
XIII. The culture of peace

Teachers and educators can look at these themes and decide which themes they would like to explore with their classrooms in teaching culture to their students. By exploring each theme, teachers will be able to look more deeply into what makes cultures so fascinating and interesting to learn. With each theme listed above, I have created activities that a teacher could use in the classroom. In addition, I have added some recommended multicultural children’s literature that could be used as well.

“Multicultural literature offers opportunities for personal reflection and identification with many cultures” (Castagno, 1995, p. 2). When it comes to multicultural literature, students will be learning about different cultures, and with reading and listening to different stories, students will not only learn how to read, but learn about culture. Some of the books may be advanced for first grade students, so the teacher will have to explain the story for the students to understand, and bring in cultural background information about the literature.

I have examined over twenty books, ranging from Kindergarten to Sixth Grade reading level; these books represent different cultures: African American, Middle Eastern, Jewish, Asian, Native American and Latino. I have added a reference guide for teachers and with most of the books, a personal reflection on how well the book reflects multicultural education along with one or two memorable quotes from the story that stood out. The examples are given in the Appendix, which is located after Chapter 4.

I have created an activity called Getting To Know You, where students will ask their classmates for example, if they wear glasses, they will write down the students
name. Students will learn about each other and can make friends. There is a song that I have included, called the “Getting Along Song,” which will be a fun activity for students in the classroom. Students in first grade enjoy singing songs, and a song that teaches children a positive message is important. The children will be learning about getting along with others and being friendly toward everyone, even if they are different from one another. Together these will help students learn about different cultures and bring in different multicultural literature. With such a strong emphasis on language arts in first grade, using literature will get students to relate to their classmates, and learn that every student comes from a different cultural background and help teach acceptance.
Discussion

The goal of multicultural education is to create a classroom that will further students’ individual and cultural knowledge, have students ask questions, and look at different cultural perspectives other than their own. There are many different cultures present in today’s classrooms, and teachers and educators need to understand what multicultural education is and how to incorporate this into their curriculum. There are four approaches in integrating multicultural education in the classroom. Banks created the four approaches: The Contributions Approach, The Additive Approach, The Transformation Approach, and the Integration of Ethnic Content Is the Social Action Approach.

The Contributions Approach is when schools or districts are first attempting to incorporate multicultural education into the curriculum. Here, teachers can bring in ethnic heroes/heroines and cultural artifacts into the curriculum. The Additive Approach lets teachers add a book, a unit or course to the curriculum without changing it considerably. The Transformation Approach, “changes the assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from several perspectives from which problems, concepts, and issues are viewed” (Banks & McGee Banks, 2010, p. 242). The last approach, Integration of Ethnic Content Is the Social Action Approach, has all the elements of the Transformation Approach, but adds components that require students to make decisions and take actions related to the concept, issue, or problem studied in the unit. A major goal of this approach is to educate
students on social criticism and social change and teach the students decision-making
skills (Banks & McGee Banks, 2010).

Teachers may hear the term *multicultural education* but do not know what it
means or how to implement it into the curriculum. With diverse populations in the
classroom, teachers need to better meet the changing diversity among their schools and
community, by re-examining the curriculum that is being employed through their
schools, and by creating lessons and activities that will bring in cultural relevancy.

In becoming culturally relevant teachers and understanding how to implement
multicultural education, teachers will learn more about their students. The curriculum
guide that I created is to help educators find ways to bring multicultural education into
the classroom. I found the *What Is Culture?* children’s book that explains culture and all
the different aspects of culture in a way that first grade students would be able to
understand. Through creating the All About Me book, students will be able to share their
family cultures and learn about themselves. These are just a few examples of what
multicultural education can accomplish in the classroom.

I want teachers to find good multicultural literature that accurately represents
cultures. The personal reflections are for teachers to examine the book more closely to
see whether that book is either right for their grade level or too advanced for their
students. The books can always be broken down for students to understand with teacher
guidance, which goes back to the teacher’s being culturally aware and using the cultural
backgrounds and interests of their students. My project is designed to bring in
multicultural education into first grade language arts by using the curriculum guide to
help develop lessons and activities in the classroom. In using a curriculum guide, there is room for teachers to make changes or add lessons and activities that better suit the grade level, school, faculty and the students’ needs and interests.

**Conclusion**

By creating culturally responsive lessons, teachers will be more culturally aware and will use multicultural education in the classroom. Students will start becoming more motivated and interested in their education because they are learning about different cultures and students. Seeing that their teachers care about them and who they are, students will respond better in the classroom. I want teachers to understand how to use multicultural education, whether it is for lessons, activities in the classroom or outside of school. With diversity present in our communities and schools, it is important that student teachers also learn about multicultural education, because they need to learn how to use this before they enter the classroom. Student teachers need to be prepared for the diverse student populations that will comprise their classrooms, and need to know how to teach all of their students. Teachers’ learning about their students and understanding their backgrounds and interests can help close the achievement gap. In guiding students and using curriculum that fits the students’ needs, teachers and students will learn from each other and do a better job. All teachers need to use so much more in their classrooms besides just teaching to the district curriculum and teaching to the state standards.

**Limitations**
With education today being so highly pushed by state standards and test scores along with time constraints, teachers and educators are limited in what they can teach in the classroom. The curriculum guide could be seen as a deterrent that takes time away from learning the standards. With such an emphasis on test scores, educators might not want to bother using a curriculum guide that is not focused on teaching to the test. In addition, there might be teachers who are not open to using a guide and do not want to teach multicultural education. There are teachers who are set in their ways and only want to stick to what they know, and having to learn a new concept might scare educators, especially when they hear that it has to do with culture. The term multicultural education can make educators nervous, because it sounds complicated and difficult. Multicultural education can also be seen as a sense of change, confusing and not necessary.

**Recommendations**

If there are any recommendations on changes to the curriculum guide, teachers and educators should make changes they feel are necessary to fit their students’ needs and interests. This is designed as a guide, and some lessons or activities might need to be changed to fit the classroom or students’ needs. In addition, if there is anything that could be added to the curriculum guide to make it better, then that should occur. My curriculum guide is designed to guide, help and give teachers and educators ideas on ways to use multicultural education in their classrooms. Although this curriculum guide is designed for first grade language arts, the guide can be used in other grade levels and subjects, making the necessary adjustments to the guide as needed. Teachers can use this guide to their discretion, and update the literature. Literature is always changing and
coming out with new multicultural literature, and teachers can find books that can fit into
the guides themes. This guide is designed to teach students about acceptance and
learning about one another.
FIGURES
Figure 1: Student Racial/Ethnic Makeup for 1998-99

Figure 2: Student Racial/Ethnic Makeup for 2008-09

(http://www.cde.ca.gov)
**Figure 3: Getting to Know You**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plays soccer</th>
<th>Wears glasses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knows another language</td>
<td>Likes to read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a pet</td>
<td>Is smiling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX

Multicultural Curriculum Guide
What Is Culture?

Multicultural education is defined as “An education that is designed and shaped by several cultural perspectives.” In bringing cultural perspectives to the classrooms, teachers need to learn about their students cultural backgrounds and students interests. I took a children’s book called *What is Culture?* and brought in different ideas that teachers can use in their classroom. There are fourteen different themes in this curriculum guide, and some of these themes have literature that goes along with that certain theme. Each theme can be used with related curriculum that is being taught in the classroom, if the children are reading a story about Mexico, the teacher can use the Continents and Countries theme, and use a map to show to Mexico and bring in a Social Studies lesson about Mexico.

The themes can also be used as a teaching tool to bring in multicultural education and have students learn about different cultures. Each theme can be used accordingly, if the teacher wants to teach one theme a month, or teach more than one theme at a time. This can be left up to the teacher on how he/she would like to teach each theme, but my biggest goal is for students and teachers to learn about culture and help shape how they view different cultures and learn about each other.
I. Continents and Countries

In looking at students’ geographical backgrounds and identifying where they come from, teachers can take a map and pinpoint each student. Using a world map, for example, enables a teacher to show students, whether the student is from Mexico or the Ukraine, where these countries are located on a map and discuss this with the children to help them better understand where a student comes from and learn geography. Using a state map, students will see different cities that students might have come from. Studying students’ geography can bring in lessons on social studies and lead into history.

Literature


Memorable Quote

Ali thought of something his father had said that had always puzzled him: “In the desert there is nothing. Or everything. It depends how you look at it, how you live.”

Personal Reflection

A story based on Middle Eastern culture, this children’s story showed the rich culture through the beautiful illustrations of clothing, animals and the people. Also, the author used Middle Eastern words and brought them into the story, telling the reader how to pronounce the each word and what it means on the last page of the story. Although the author is not from the Middle East, the author wanted to tell a story about the hospitality from the Berber people when visiting Morocco. This is a good story to bring into a
classroom and read to your children because there are not many Middle Eastern books and the author does a good job bringing the reader into the story and learning about a different culture.

**Literature**


**Memorable Quote**

“She pointed to each kitten and said, “*Moja, mbili, tatu, nne, tano.*” Mama was surprised, and hugged her. Elizabeti knew how to count!”

**Personal Reflection**

This is a Tanzanian story that describes a young girl’s first day of school. The author spent a lot of time in Tanzania and learned about their culture and background, such as language and dance, which is shown in the text of the book and in the illustrations. In the beginning, the author tells you how to pronounce Tanzanian words, which is helpful when reading the story. Reading this story made me want to learn more about Tanzanian culture.

**II. What is History?**

After looking at students’ geography, teachers can look at the history of these countries and cities and look at stories of different cultures. Here, teachers can bring in historical children’s literature and read to the class, bring in documents, pictures, music and videos that relate to multicultural education. With a student who is from Japan, a teacher can bring in photos, show Japanese writing and examples of buildings that are in
Japan, and describe the history of Japan to the students. In addition, the student can bring 
in items from home and share with the class.

**Literature**

NY: Lee & Low Books.

**Memorable Quote**

“Just because I look like the enemy doesn’t mean I am,” she had told her mother 
angrily. “I am American. I was born right here in Los Angeles.”

**Personal Reflection**

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Japanese citizens in the United States were 
sent to concentration camps. It did not matter if they were born in the U.S. or not, all 
Japanese were rounded up and sent away in these camps. For a few years, the Japanese 
had to stay in the camps, giving away most personal possessions, such as cars, and losing 
their jobs. This story does a great job in showing the struggles of a Japanese family and 
the anger the little girl has for staying in the camp. She finds hope in planting flowers and 
making her father smile. I found that this children’s book is a good example of a story to 
use that is both multicultural and historical.

**Literature**

Low Books.
Memorable Quote

“Where is home, I wonder. Is it inside me, like Mom says, or all around me? I was born in America and my name is Mai. Yet when I look into Tran Quang Tai’s eyes, I feel like I belong here too. I think home must be inside me and all around me too.”

Personal Reflection

A young girl named Mai travels to Vietnam with her mother, and Mai’s mother is going back to Vietnam to find her birth family. The author is not Vietnamese, but describes what it is like to try to discover your past and learn more about who you are and where you come from. The illustrations show the city and country life of Vietnam beautifully, showing ways of transportation and different temples and statues. The story describes the war that occurred in Vietnam and how it changed the lives of so many people. A great story, but this is definitely a more advanced children’s book and would be good to use as a segue in teaching about the Vietnam war and family history.

Literature


Memorable Quote

“We are free at last.”

Personal Reflection

A slave family is escaping their master, Addison Jones, and hoping to get across the county line and be free. This is a wonderful story that describes the suffering of an African American family and a brave little girl who wants to be free. It has been five years since Abraham Lincoln made the slaves free, and this family knows it is their time
to escape. This is a good story to discuss slavery and the courage it took to escape a dangerous situation and the consequences that could ensue if they get caught. The illustrations are very well done, and through the pictures the reader is able to visualize and feel what this family is going through.

**Literature**


El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos.

**Memorable Quote**

“Carlitos,” she said, “to work so hard and get paid so little isn’t fair. So today, all the janitors met outside the union hall and voted to stop working… to strike! We’re going to let those offices get dirtier and dirtier and won’t clean them again until we get the pay raises we deserve.”

**Personal Reflection**

While reading this book, I was also learning about how hard people worked and had to fight to get better pay. I had no idea there was a huge strike in Los Angeles, where janitors stopped doing their jobs and started a strike to get better pay. At the beginning of the story the author talks briefly about the actual strike, and at the end of the story shows a picture of the leader of the strike, Dolores Sanchez, and talks about how Dolores helped not only janitors, but others who needed her representation and fight with the unions.

This is a good multicultural book to use, not only representing the Hispanic culture, but also bringing in a historical and social event.
Literature


Memorable Quote

“Our lives our different now. My eldest brother works in a barbershop. His hair is white as winter snows. My wife does beadwork and I make headdresses of feathers that sell well. We do not hunt.”

Personal Reflection

While reading this story about the different moons, I liked the poetry of the writing and what the moonstick represented. At first, while looking at the illustrations, I was troubled that it showed Indians in the Western interpretation, but as the story went on, I was seeing more cultural aspects that represented the Sioux Indians. The author also shows how things have changed for the Indians, such as how they now work in shops and sell their crafts to make money. The grandfather still wants to pass down his culture, so he shows his grandson what the moonstick is and how changes will always come.

III. The Story of You

With history, you are learning more about who you are and where you come from. In learning more about your culture, it is good to know more about your family and where you come from. This would also be a good opportunity for teachers to have students bring in items from home that represent where they come from, or have a family member come in and describe their culture to the class.
Literature


Memorable Quote

“Your new room was filled with toys, stuffed animals, and a new crib. All the grownups watched as you carefully checked out your new room. Then you smiled as if to say ‘I’m home.’”

Personal Reflection

After reading this story about a little Chinese girl being adopted by an American woman, I thought this would be a good story to use to learn about adoption, and relating this to the Story of You. There are children who are adopted and having a story that puts a positive light on adoption and family is good for students to read. Children who are adopted might want to share their story with the class. Children from all over the world are adopted, and students need to know that it doesn’t matter where you come from, that everyone can be loved and have a family.

IV. Beliefs

With so many religions in the world, teachers can describe what religion is, where people gather and whether each religion has any books or writings. In addition, religions often have symbols; for example, the cross is a symbol for Christianity, and the Star of David is symbolic for Judaism; the teacher can show a variety of symbols and explain what each symbol means for that religion. When the holidays come, such as Hanukah and
Christmas, the teacher can have the students learn what these holidays mean and students
could create a drawing or color a picture of the holiday.

**Literature**


**Memorable Quote**

“But I think it has to do with being strong in the bad time and remembering it in
the good time. And for the women in Grandma’s barracks and the others who didn’t live
to come out.”

**Personal Reflection**

Reading a children’s book about the Jewish culture and the holiday Hanukkah lets
the reader learn about Jewish culture. In the story, the Grandma tells the story of when
she and her sister were in a concentration camp and how Hanukkah gave them hope. The
illustrations are very detailed and made the story even better to read and understand,
seeing the anguish on the Grandma’s face reliving the story and telling it to her
grandchildren and family.

**V. The Culture of Clothing**

An example of a multicultural lesson would be for a teacher to look at different
types of traditional clothing that are worn around the world, and have students see
different pictures and talk about what clothes they wear at home and whether they have
family who wear different clothes. In the book there is a picture of some Muslim boys
who live in Indonesia, who are wearing long, loose shirts and have caps on their heads.
This is a traditional look in the Muslim culture, in which boys and girls keep their heads
covered most of the time. By showing examples of clothing worn around the world, children will see and experience different cultures and how people dress as it represents where they come from.

**Literature**


**Memorable Quote**

“My home is back in India,” said Naniji softly. “I love it there, just as you love it here. It’s where all my memories are, all the parts of me – everything except you.”

**Personal Reflection**

This book is about a family from India, and the illustrations show the grandmother wearing the Indian clothing. The story is written in both Arabic and English, which can show children what Arabic writing looks like and could help a child who is learning English with reading skills.

**VI. Tasting Culture**

Many types of food that we eat in America come from different cultures. We eat Chinese, Mexican, Italian, French, Japanese, and Indian food to name just a few. Have students talk about their favorite foods to eat and as the teacher, write it down. For example, if there are many students who eat Italian food, like pizza, then keep track to see what is popular. Share your results with the class and point out there are many different types of foods that come from different cultures. Have a day with the class where the students bring in a dish that represents their culture, have the students share this with the class and then the students can taste different foods that they might not have
had before. Students are learning more about different cultures just by sharing their food with everyone.

**Literature**


**Memorable Quote**

“Maria happily kneaded the *masa*. She felt grown-up, wearing her mother’s apron. Her mom had even let her wear lipstick and perfume. If only I could wear Mom’s ring, she thought to herself.”

**Personal Reflection**

This is a story about a Latino family who are making tamales for Christmas dinner. The girl, Maria helps her mother and father make the tamales, and while making the tamales she plays with her mother’s diamond ring. Thinking that the ring is in one of the tamales that they made, Maria and her cousins eat all the tamales to look for the ring. She tells her mother what happened, but her mother had the ring the whole time and the whole family goes and makes a new batch of tamales for dinner. I liked this story because it brings in the traditions of Latino cultures, and the idea of having a strong supportive family.

**VII. Music and Dance**

Using music and dance in the classroom is a great opportunity to have students learn new movements, dance styles, instruments and types of music that are out there. Bring in different types of instruments such as guitar, violin, maracas, and trumpets, to name just a few. Having students see and hear these instruments will expose them to
different instruments, types of music and let them think about in which countries each instrument is popular. Another way to introduce music and let students hear different music is to feature different styles week by week. Have students listen to mariachi music, country music, rock music, music from different countries, and so on. Dancing is important in representing different cultures, such as Russian ballet, African dances, Irish jig, and line dancing, break dancing and Native American dances. Students should learn these dances, either by using videos to show different dances or even by taking a field trip to watch a particular kind of dance. By exposing students to the different dances and music that are in culture, you encourage students to become more involved in learning about these cultures.

Literature


Memorable Quote

“He brought pleasure and joy to the people he’d greet.”

Personal Reflection

This is a really fun story to read with children because it has rhyming words, and the teacher can make a beat of the story while reading. This brings in music, by creating a beat or singing the story, and brings in dancing. In the afterword of the story, there is a description of the actual Bojangles and how he loved to dance and became a popular Black performer during the 1930s.
VIII. Celebrating culture

In the book *What Is Culture?* celebrating culture is nicely written for children to understand. A way to celebrate culture is by celebrating birthdays, holidays, and special occasions in the year. In many cultures, showing a celebration is using music, dancing, costumes, food and parades. An example could be to have a teacher ask the students what their favorite celebration is such as a birthday, Christmas, Fourth of July, Cinco De Mayo, New Year’s Eve, Chinese New Year, etc. and then create a table to show what students like. This brings in Social Studies, Language Arts and Math skills in the lesson as the students are learning multicultural education. Also, discussing different celebrations that happen all over the world, like Hanukah, Chinese New Year, Cinco de Mayo, or Thanksgiving will let students see various aspects of different celebrations and cultures. Teachers can bring in activities and artwork that represents different cultures, such as coloring a turkey for Thanksgiving or making a dragon for Chinese New Year.

Literature


Memorable Quote

“But tonight won’t even feel like the first night of Hanukkah.” Rachel took the menorah from the cupboard and pushed the first two candles in. “No latkes. No company.”
Personal Reflection

This is a very lively and colorful children’s book about a young Jewish girl named Rachel who wants to make latkes for the first day of Hanukkah. She goes over to her neighbor’s house and ends up making a huge mess while making latkes. I enjoyed reading this story because Rachel wants to celebrate Hanukkah with her tradition of making latkes. Although she makes a mess, she ends up bringing her family and her neighbor, Mrs. Greenberg, a lonely older woman, together for the first day of Hanukkah.

The illustrations are colorful and bring the character and story to life, showing a menorah too. The thing that I liked best about this story is that it includes a recipe for latkes at the beginning of the story, letting readers know what latkes are and encouraging them to make them at home for themselves to bring in Jewish culture into the reader’s home.

IX. Sports

Do you play any sports? What is your favorite sport to play? What sport do you like to watch? Who is your favorite player? What sport would you like to learn? These are some questions that a teacher can ask students to get interested in learning about sports and culture. If a student likes hockey, ask the student if they knew that hockey is originally from Canada. Have the students name different sports and ask the students if they know where this sport comes from. Students will be able to get physical exercise by playing these different sports such as baseball, basketball, soccer, and football. If a student knows another sport, such as karate, have the student share with the class some karate moves, maybe enticing more kids to want to try karate or a similar activity.
Literature


Memorable Quote

“Because,” he said, “America is at war with Japan, and the government thinks that Japanese Americans can’t be trusted. But it’s wrong that we’re in here. We’re Americans too!”

Personal Reflection

This story is about a young boy growing up during WWII, whose family is sent to the Japanese internment camps. The families have been there a long time and the children are starting to get restless, so the boy’s father decides to have them build a baseball field. The boy is not very good at first, but then hits a homerun and wins the game. Even after leaving the internment camp, he stills feels like an outsider, but when he plays baseball he feels more like himself and uses his emotions to play better. This is a good book to read to teach children about how people were considered different and sent away just because of who they were and that it is wrong, but being able to play sports can help children cope with difficult surroundings and situations.

X. The Culture of Art

Colors, paintings, statutes, shapes and drawings are some examples of showing and using art to represent culture. Students can create different art projects that are from different cultures and teachers can bring in pictures of art. In the book, a Korean boy is holding a kite and wearing traditional Korean clothing. The teacher can have the students
create and make their own Korean kite, make a flag that represents their culture, and draw pictures on what they have learned about culture. Art can bring into many subjects such as math and social studies, and bringing in culture makes the art more interesting for students to learn.

**Literature**


**Memorable Quote**

He asked, “How did you know I’m a Filipino boy?” The *manong* said, “Because you jump around just like a fish. Do you like fish?”

**Personal Reflection**

Lakas is a young Filipino boy living in San Francisco who has a dream that a *manong*, the Filipino word in Tagalog for old man, that he will meet and a fish that can walk and talk. He finds the fish in real life and the fish takes him on an adventure through Manilatown. I found this story to be multicultural because the story uses Filipino words, and the author gives a brief history at the beginning and at the end of the story about Manilatown and what Filipinos had to go through. The illustrations are full of color and let the reader visualize what they are reading. In addition, on the right hand side of the book the story is written in Tagalog, and on the left hand side it is written in English, letting readers see two languages in written form.

**Literature**

Memorable Quote

“Hen, Granddaughter, as she travels the sky this whole earth is stretched beneath her feet. Listen, and I will share with you some of the stories our old people tell about what Sky Bear sees and hears through the night.”

Personal Reflection

There are many different Native American poems, all from different tribes, that are presented in this children’s book. The author does a great job in bringing in different poems and connecting them with the illustrations that are full of color and well done. At the end of the book, the author gives a brief history and where the author has heard the poems, and wanting his readers to have respect for the elders and tribes.

XI. Our Multicultural World

Students need to learn that multicultural means “made up of many cultures.” With students knowing that everyone comes from a different place and that people may look different, everyone should be treated the same. Having the students work together in partners, groups, or as a class teaches the students to get along and work together. The students can sing the Getting Along Song to show how important it is to work together and be friendly.

Literature

Memorable Quote

“But Rhodopis is a slave!” protested one of the servant girls. Kipa sniffed. “She is not even Egyptian.”

“She is the most Egyptian of all,” the Pharaoh declared. “For her eyes are as green as the Nile, her hair as feathery as papyrus, and her skin the pink of a lotus flower.”

Personal Reflection

This story is different from the Disney Cinderella, because the girl they are talking about, Rhodopis, is Greek and was kidnapped by pirates and sold into slavery in Egypt. She is different looking than everyone else and is a slave. When she meets the Pharaoh and he falls for her, he does not care what she looks like and that she is different.

This is a good book to use for multicultural education because the characters are coming from different backgrounds, and shows that it does not matter where an individual comes from. Also, the books shows lots of bright colors and the illustrations show Ancient Egyptian art and gives good descriptions of people.

Literature


Memorable Quote

The Blessing of the Animals is a ceremony which takes place every year on the day before Easter Sunday. On this day the animals are blessed so all will go well with them during the year.
**Personal Reflection**

This is a story of a little girl named Juanita who lives in Los Angeles and is excited to take her pet dove to the Blessing of the Animals. This book was written in 1948, and I was surprised that a multicultural book about a Hispanic community would even have been written at that time. The author did a good job in bringing in the language, clothing, songs and other cultural aspects such as the Blessing of the Animals.

**Literature**


**Memorable Quote**

Papa said the colt could be named Berchick (which means “little bear” in Yiddish) because his coat was so furry. We all agreed and that became his name at once.

**Personal Reflection**

This is a story of a Jewish family living on a homestead. The mother finds a colt and the colt becomes part of the family. When times get hard, the family has to move and the horse is sold. Eventually the horse runs away and lives among wild horses. The purpose behind this story is the meaning of freedom and happiness. The author uses some Yiddish words throughout the story, and this book won the National Jewish Book Award.

**Literature**

Memorable Quote

Mama and Papa have a store, a Chinese store in Guatemala City.

Personal Reflection

The author Amelia Lau Carling, grew up in Guatemala City as a Chinese immigrant, where her family had a general store, learning about Chinese, Spanish and Mayan cultures. She turned her experience into a children’s book. I liked that the author used a mix of cultures throughout the story and bringing in the Spanish language with Chinese meanings. The illustrations used show all the cultures too, with Mayan Indians shopping, Spanish stores and culture and Chinese culture, such as the family sitting down for dinner using chopsticks. This is a very good book to use that is multicultural and representing more than one culture, which is not seen in children’s books very often.

Literature


Memorable Quote

Sometimes I think the world is a huge body tumbling in space, all curled up like a child sleeping. People are far apart, but connected.

Personal Reflection

One of the first things that I noticed about this book is that it won the Jane Addams Children’s Book Award for peace and freedom. A little girl named Mona and her grandmother, her Sitti (Grandma in Arabic), live a world apart, but stay connected to each other. The illustrations show the Arabic culture, with women wearing scarves and
the traditional clothing, the countryside and architecture. The author describes how Mona and her Sitti do not speak the same language when Mona goes to visit her grandmother, but they learn to communicate in different ways. I liked how the author brought in Arabic words into the literature and how well the illustrator showed the Arabic culture.

XI. **Fun with Culture**

In having fun with culture, teachers can create different multicultural activities, such as creating a class book on the student’s different cultures, an art show, a culture fair and share different cultures with the class. Students can bring in costumes, food, music, dances, books, artwork, and have family share their own cultural experiences. Once a month, have the class devote one day to one of the cultural aspects that they have learned such a music, art, clothes or food. Teachers can create a bulletin board devoted to multicultural education and display different cultures, varying weekly to monthly depending on the teacher and students interests. The teacher can have a shelf or bookcase also devoted to culture, by bringing in different artwork, sculptures, costumes, pictures and other pieces that reflect different cultures. Students can also bring in cultural pieces to share with the class and display in their multicultural center or board.

**Literature**

Memorable Quote

After hearing this story on that sunny afternoon, it quickly became one of my favorites because it taught me that a son, no matter how young, can teach his father a thing or two.

Personal Reflection

A father tells his young son about a story of a father crow and little crow. The father crow warned his son of humans and to fly away when you see a human reach for a stone, because the father crow knew that the human was going to throw the stone at the crows. The little crow came with an idea to fly away from humans before they even reach for a stone. This information went to all the crows all over North and South America, which is why birds fly away now when a human comes too close. The story is written in both English and Spanish, and when written in English, the author still uses some Spanish words, building on the Spanish culture. The illustrations are very colorful, showing the Spanish culture.

Memorable Quote

“My uncle,” he said, “I see now what you mean. Every place we go is a sacred place if we remember that we always carry the teachings with us.”

Personal Reflection

Joseph Bruchac, the author of this children’s book does a wonderful job of describing past stories of different Native American tribes. He gives a brief history at the beginning of the story, and at the end of the story shows a map of all the different Native American tribes in the United States and gives a pronunciation of the Native American
words used throughout the story. The illustrations are done with great detail. This is definitely a book I would use to bring in multicultural literature and learn more about Native American culture and legends.

XII. The Culture of Peace

What does peace mean to you? How can we make peace? How do you treat others?

Students need to understand that having peace is important and being friendly. The vow of peace is in the What is Culture? book where the student places their hand over their hearts and think of someone that they love and care about.

Literature


Memorable Quote

Avi bit his lip and looked away. “She does not want us to fight,” he said slowly. Hamudi stared down at his feet. “She wants peace.”

“Then we will share,” Avi said.

Personal Reflection

In Jerusalem, there are four quarters, the Jewish Quarter, the Muslim Quarter, the Armenian Quarter, and the Christian Quarter. This story of a young Jewish boy and a young Muslim boy both living in Jerusalem and how a cat and her kittens brought peace
and friendship between two different cultures is a great multicultural story for children to read. The author brings in both Hebrew and Arabic words in the story. The illustrations are very well done, showing the cultural heritages, especially in clothing. The author gives a brief history and a glossary at the end of the book and encourages peace among everyone.

**XIII. The Vow of Peace**

I promise to respect myself and others in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I promise to treat others the way I would like to be treated.

I know that peace begins with me.

Peace! Peace!

I am child of peace!
The Getting Along Song

How can we get along, get along, get along?

How can we get along, get along in school?
   I can share my things (share!).
   I can share my things (share!).
   I can share my things with you.
   I can talk to you (talk!).
   I can talk to you (talk!).
   I can talk to you about my feelings.

How can we get along, get along, get along?

How can we get along, get along in school?
   I can listen (listen!).
   I can listen (listen!).
   I can listen to you.
   I can take turns (take turns!).
   I can take turns (take turns!).
   I can take turns with you.

How can we get along, get along, get along?

How can we get along, get along school?

* (Bower & Lobdell, 2005, p. 168)
REFERENCES


California Department of Education: http://www.cde.ca.gov


