



Knowing Our Neighborhood

Curriculum Unit 05.03.03
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Overview

For most of my students Kindergarten is the first time their community is broadened beyond their families. They come to school having experienced a very insular world, sometimes one that consists only of family and home. School is often their first exposure to people of different cultures and family dynamics. It is also where they have the opportunity to learn about a new place and claim that place as somewhere important to their lives. Through the unit, *Knowing Our Neighborhood*, I hope to give my students a variety of experiences that help them express how they feel about the places they care about. I also hope to broaden their view of what their neighborhood is and give them a sense of belonging and responsibility within that community.

Importance of Landscape

The landscape in which we grow up can be as influential on us as we are on it. While my students have had very limited experiences they definitely have a sense of the place they call home. And while this is somewhere they already know a great deal about, they are as of yet, fairly untainted by outsiders' opinions of this place. In the book *Language of Landscape*, Anne Whiston Spirn writes that the word landscape actually is a place and the people that inhabit that place. The two are interconnected and both necessary when talking about landscape. As human beings, the more we are aware of the landscape in which we are a part, the more we are empowered to preserve or change it.

Spirn writes "We are imprinted with the landscape of our early childhood" (1).

My students will always have some evidence of growing up in their particular neighborhood in their being. It is an important part of who they are, and because they are so young their awareness of their environment is still developing. Early Childhood students are impressionable. I hope to cultivate their ability to look at their neighborhood and express their feelings about the landscape they are a part of. My hope is to exploit their impressionability as little as possible by not trying to influence how they feel about where they are, but simply to help them develop an awareness of it.

This unit is meant not only to familiarize my students with their neighborhood, but also to allow them to realize that they are an integral part of it. I want them to realize that they are members of a community, and they have the ability to be an active and positive force within that community regardless of their age. I hope to begin to cultivate their ability to express how they feel about it through writing so that later in life, when necessary, they can make their voices heard.

Introduction

This unit is intended specifically for kindergarten and first grade students at Roberto Clemente Leadership Academy. The unit will attempt to give the students more of a feeling of ownership in their neighborhood and the places that are part of it. I hope to instill a sense of community in them by first letting them express how they feel about where they live through poetry, allowing them a better understanding of the geography of it through mapping, and finally allowing them to feel empowered by having them participate in a community based project. This unit could be useful to any elementary teacher who is involved in teaching about community or poetry.

The Hill

The neighborhood which I have been teaching in New Haven for the past year is called The Hill. It has the reputation of being the poorest and most dangerous in the city. Located between Ella Grasso Boulevard and the train tracks, it is an area that travelers are advised to avoid and has a history of poverty and dissent.

History

The area was home to new immigrant groups throughout the 1800s. First the Irish settled here, working on the railroads and Farmington River Canal. Then the Eastern European Jews came to the neighborhood, fleeing religious persecution in Europe. They set up tailoring shops and other businesses all along Congress Avenue. There also was a large African American population, mostly resettled from the South in search of work. These groups were often clashing as they were competing for the same jobs, fighting over resources and expressing cultural differences. Into the present many people migrate to the The Hill, although the population has changed from immigrants, to predominantly African Americans moving up from the south, and Puerto Ricans relocating from Puerto Rico, or other parts of the United States. (2) The Hill was always a place where poverty and lack of resources were issues, but during the 19th and early parts of the twentieth century there was industry and some services. There was even a time when the Hill had an active music community. Dellie Hoskie, an R&B artist from the 1960s, remembers in a recent article, a time when the Hill was thought of as New Haven's Harlem, when jazz clubs and jam sessions dotted the neighborhood. (3) In fact the song "In the Still of the Night" was written on Congress Avenue at this time. Despite this type of triumph and an active local "scene", the Hill (and most of the city of New Haven) was already beginning to decline. The neighborhood, like many other inner city neighborhoods in the United States, went through a difficult period during the last century.

The Hill Today

I recently went on a few excursions through the Hill to see what the neighborhood is like in the present. As I drove through the streets I noticed many abandoned buildings and homes. Some of the homes looked as if they had been through a fire, and were haphazardly boarded up. After driving through the neighborhood twice I realized there were no grocery stores and no pharmacies. Most of the businesses I saw were corner bodegas, pawn shops or check cashing facilities and fast food restaurants. There was one laundromat that I noticed in the entire area. The lack of resources in the neighborhood where my students live was worrisome. I knew that many of my students parents did not have ready accessibility to cars and that getting basic necessities such as food, medicine and clothes was potentially difficult. Despite the blight, however, there were some interesting and joyful areas in the neighborhood. There was a large park with a colorful play area that seemed well kept. Between the abandoned and neglected houses were ones that had flowers growing and families talking and relaxing on the porches. There was even a large flea market on Ella Grasso Boulevard that on the weekend was akin to marketplaces in another time with vendors bartering over their wares with the locals, who made a sort of celebration out of their shopping there. These places which reflect some sort of hope are scarce, however. The area has a forgotten, or at the least neglected feeling during the day and can feel dangerous at night.

My Experience

This neighborhood contrasts greatly to the quiet suburban neighborhood that I grew up in. It was a different time of course, but it was also a very different place. I remember feeling a sense of safety and of ownership in the community. I remember as children we were able to spend much of our free time together outside and unsupervised. This allowed us to really get to know where we lived and also feel as if we were an integral part of it.

There was an area behind the house that was the property of the public school nearby. It was a baseball field, and beyond it was an area we called "The Woods". There was a stream surrounded by trees and brush. We loved to explore this place, and observe the wildlife and plant life that was there. I remember, when I was eight years old I went out one morning to the back yard of my home. There I saw large machinery parked at the edge of "The Woods" and making a terrible noise. It appeared that the trees were being cut down, and cleared away. I was devastated and outraged. Because I felt ownership and importance in this place, I immediately informed my mother that I need to write a letter. I sat down and earnestly wrote a letter to the President of the United States and explained the situation pleading with him to stop the destroying of "the Woods".

Unfortunately, this attempt to save this place that was so special to me was not successful. I received a letter from an official in government that the letter had been forwarded to apologizing for the ruination, but explaining the necessity of change and progress within our society. Although I had not persevered as I had hoped, I continued to have a strong sense of ownership and activism when it came to the fate of my community. This was largely because these sensibilities were instilled in me at a very young age. It also was because I knew the area that I lived in, felt pride in it, and felt that it was mine to take care of. The Hill, where my students live, is a very different neighborhood. It is an area where poverty and crime have been prominent

for decades. There are few green areas and few community meeting areas. My students often tell me they spend most of their time indoors, and are not safe to be outside unsupervised. I don't believe that this type of atmosphere often instills a sense of ownership in the members in the community. It can, in fact breed apathy. Unfortunately, the current climate in their neighborhood is one that has been characteristic of countless inner city communities in the United States in the last four decades.

Overview of the Decline of Inner Cities in America

After World War II inner city neighborhoods that had been working class vibrant communities with diverse populations and job opportunities began to decline and the neighborhoods of New Haven was no exception. The exodus to the suburbs began as early as the mid 1800s as middle class and upper class families moved out, looking for better living conditions while still having access to the jobs and amenities of downtown cities. This trend continued through to the mid 20th century. However when industry, retail, and other business began to be enticed into the suburbs, and plans for urban renewal began to fail, the economic and social welfare of the cities plummeted. The inner city neighborhoods that, despite conflict and culture clashes, were once working neighborhoods became destitute. Drugs and the drug industry became apparent, goods and services became scarce, and the statistics of poverty and crime rose to levels before unseen.

This unfortunate occurrence happened in countless numbers of cities in the United States and New Haven was not exempt. New Haven is a small, and, as David Rusk termed in *Cities without Suburbs*, an "inelastic city". (4) This means the city has used all of its possible land to capacity in some way and is filled to capacity. According to Rusk, inelastic cities are most difficult to revitalize because there is no room for growth. New Haven did not annex suburbs, and thus lost a tax base as development moved to the suburbs.

Around 1954 the flight for the suburbs began to have a negative impact on New Haven's economy. It did not go unnoticed. Mayor Richard Lee attempted one of the earliest urban renewal projects at the time but it was unsuccessful. (5) The construction of Interstates 91 and 95 threw some of the cities neighborhoods into even further decline There were a few more unsuccessful attempts at renewal but it wasn't until the mid to late 1990s that New Haven began to have a resurgence, and these attempts to help and sustain decimated neighborhoods began to be effective. As with many of the urban neighborhoods that had this devastating experience of suburban flight, grassroots efforts within the neighborhoods have been some of the most successful. In some inner city neighborhoods, such as the South Bronx, these community based grassroots efforts were imperative to turning a neighborhood for the better. In New Haven these types of efforts have, at the least, been helpful to the community. There has been resurgence in businesses in downtown, and some very successful social service groups in the area.

Reasoning for the Unit

In order to continue revitalizing the inner city neighborhoods that were devastated in past fifty years, I believe there needs to be a sense of pride and power among the members of the community. In order to organize and implement change people need to believe that they can make change happen. Through this unit I hope to cultivate this sensibility in my students. They are after all, the next generation, and they will be the ones that continue the shaping of their neighborhoods.

Class Demographics

I am currently teaching 23 5-7 year olds in a mainstream Kindergarten classroom. There are 11 girls in the class and 13 boys. My students are African American and Latino, with 18 African Americans and five Latinos. Every child in my class speaks English as a first language, although two students speak English and Spanish at home. Of 23 students three students went to some sort of preschool, and only one of these students was in school for more than a year. Therefore most of my students experience outside of the home is extremely limited. Through talking to my students and their parents I have realized that up to 80% of my students have moved at least once in their memory that at least three have been without a permanent home at some time. At least half of the population in the neighborhood have limited or no access to private vehicles, although I am not sure how many in my class that is the case. More than half the class has at least one parent working in the household, although the majority of the students still qualify for the free lunch program.

Because of my students' limited experiences and their age I plan on building slowly broadening their sense of community, by scaffolding lessons as the unit progresses. The lessons will begin by dealing with the areas of the community that the students are most familiar with (their homes), and then be brought to include areas that they are newly familiar with (school, playground) and finally incorporate the places that we discover. We will also grow from understanding that we are part of a classroom community, a school community and finally a neighborhood community. Because of this process of broadening their perspective, I believe the unit will take at least six months to culminate successfully.

Unit Objectives

In this unit I plan to give my students a chance to know their neighborhood better, and to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility towards it. To do this I plan to have three areas in which we will focus.

Part one will focus on Poetry about Place. In this part of the unit the students will be exposed to various poems about place, as well as be creating their own. This will help them to express how they feel about where they live, be able to describe it through the senses. I also hope that it will help them to express what it is that they would change about these places and what they would preserve.

Part two will be a section in which we map places that are familiar to us, and then begin to navigate new areas within our neighborhood and incorporate those into our maps. This process will help me to have a better understanding of how the students perceive their community and what parts of it they are familiar with. Through this exercise I hope to create a sense of commonality of place among my students, as well as a new familiarity with their neighborhood.

Part three will be a community project in which we will hopefully work in cooperation with another organization active within the community to display our poems and maps in the public arena. I want the students through this type of activity to not only celebrate their accomplishments within the unit, but to also to see that their voice can be heard within their community. I want them to get a glimpse of how they can be a proactive member of the neighborhood. I also look forward to not only having my students become comfortable and familiar with a new place within the community but to giving the people within that place a chance to know them.

Part One: Poetry

Poetry is a form of writing that my current class has really connected to. As most young children do, they love to chant sing, or say anything with rhyme or repetition. Poetry is also a writing form that lends itself to emotion that can evoke memory. Because of this I think that poetry will be the ideal writing form for my students to eventually use to express how they feel about places dear to them. Poetry will allow them to explain how they perceive their landscape through the senses as well as allow them to play with meter and rhyme, something that young children are naturally apt to do.

Teaching young children to write anything at all can be a daunting task, while teaching a specific form of writing like poetry can be overwhelming. Therefore I plan to spend time daily on writing, so that my students become confident in their ability and are not intimidated when required to write in a specific style. Everyday my class has time set aside for a writing workshop. The students write daily about subjects of their own choice, being guided by daily mini lessons and teacher conferences. As we are having these writing workshops we will also be exploring poetry about places. This will help the students to broaden their vocabulary for their own writing as well as familiarize them with the genre of poetry. We will read poems about places that I have written, as well as poems by published poets. We will illustrate these poems, talk about the words they use and how they make us see, hear, smell, taste, and feel what the poet is describing. We will explore the rhythm and rhyme of poems through movement and sound. The students will create patterns with movement and sound that match the rhythm of the poem. We will create a variety of these expressions through movement and all participate in the created patterns. I hope by making the rhythm of poetry a physical experience for my students that it will allow them to really understand what a poem sounds like and allow that type of expression to come through in their own writing.

As the unit progresses I want my students to begin creating their own poetry about place. I expect that this

will be an ongoing process throughout the unit, and that the students will create a variety of poems by the culminating activity. Creating these poems will give the students, not only a sense of accomplishment, but also give them a way to express their feelings about the places they hold dear. It may allow for them to tell stories about where they are from who they are and what is important to their families. Being able to do this, they may realize a sense of pride about where they are from, and hopefully a sense of their belonging to a community.

Writing Workshop

The method that I plan on using to implement the writing portion of this unit is based on the Columbia's Teacher's College Workshop model. I was trained in, and used this method for two years, and find it to be exemplary in bringing out students' authentic voices in their writing. The workshop model consists of a small mini-lesson each day on a very specific part of the students writing followed by a long period where students work on long and short term writing pieces, editing with peers and conferencing with the teacher. The way that the model works I find it to be unparalleled for teaching children to write in all forms. Each day through conferences and reviewing the students' work, the teacher is able to see where her students are and what the focus of each mini-lesson should be. The students are able to produce writing that is meaningful to them and can work on each piece for as long as they like. They also learn how to edit, rewrite and eventually "publish their products". The process has potential to create extremely high quality work. The following lesson is one that I would use during the unit. This lesson is an example of how the workshop model is set up and works in the classroom. This type of lesson takes place daily with a different mini lesson each day. In order to be effective the workshop should take place daily, the mini lessons being based on the teacher's daily assessment of her students' writing.

Writing Workshop Lesson

To help my students begin writing poetry, I want them to start noticing the "rhythm" in their own writing. Because my students have been exposed to many poems through shared reading, they are already aware of how poetry is conventionally different than prose. Today the purpose of my mini lesson is to show the students they can make their prose like poetry. I want them to create rhythm within their own writing.

Modeling: Every mini lesson begins with a clear explanation of the teaching point of the day's lesson and the teacher modeling what she expects the students to work on during the workshop. The students gather in front of me in a designated meeting area (in my classroom we have a large rug for this purpose), and I begin by explaining the mini lesson's purpose. I explain, "We have all noticed how poems have rhythm. Today we are going to find rhythm in our own writing." Then I take out a poem we are familiar with, such as "City, City". I read the poem aloud emphasizing where the poet has decided to break and create new lines. After reading I ask the students "Did you notice how the poet wrote the words in his poem so that I could actually see the rhythm while I read it? I am going to see if I can find rhythm in my writing." At this point I show a piece of my own writing on chart paper that I'd been working on previously. In the workshop model it is important that the teacher models explicitly and I find this easiest and most useful when I go through the writing process myself with the children during the lessons. The following is a piece I could use for this exercise. First I would read the piece aloud as normal prose.

My mother and father came to see my new place. I hoped they would like it.

They were quiet at first, but then I saw my father smile, and I knew they did.

I then would demonstrate, thinking aloud, how I would rewrite this piece to look like a poem and find the rhythm. At the end my rewritten piece would look something like this

My mother and father
came to see my new place.
I hoped
they would like it.
They were quiet at first,
but then I saw my father smile,
and I knew
they did.

We then read through the poem together as a group, emphasizing the new line breaks to show the "rhythm".

Practice: After modeling the exercise I give the students a chance to try it out. For this particular exercise I will have students examine another piece of writing with a partner. We will look at either another piece of mine or willing student's piece. I will choose the piece before the lesson and write it on sentence strips that will be in a pocket folder. The students will then be able to break the piece up manually and we will be able to discuss it and view the result as a class.

Individual Work: Once we have practiced as a group the students will return to get their writing folders and begin writing. At the end of the lesson I always send my students away with a reminder of what the expectations will be for the day. I will say "Remember ,today, while you are writing, you will be finding the rhythm in your own writing." The students will then begin the workshop portion, practicing the modeled exercise and continuing to work on their various pieces of writing.

During this time, it is expected that the students will be working continuously. While they have much of responsibility of deciding what tasks they will set out to accomplish during the workshop, it is never acceptable to stop working. I continuously remind my students that "there is no saying you are finished in workshop", meaning there is always something you could do, whether it is revise and old piece of writing, or start a new one. During this time I have individual writing conferences with students. This helps me to assess the progress of each individual on a regular basis as well as guides my future mini lessons.

Wrap up: At the conclusion of the workshop time, I gather the students once again at the meeting area. I reiterate the lesson of the day, and the students are given a little time to voice how it went, and what they discovered or had problems with.

Daily Writing

Although the mini lesson is different each day, the basic format of the writing workshop will stay the same throughout the year. Through this type of teaching I plan to have my students write their poetry about place. It can be a long process, but in my experience, the results show that it is one that is very worthwhile.

Part Two: Mapping the Neighborhood

The mapping portion of the unit will not only help the students with understanding their neighborhood, but will also help them develop spatial awareness and beginning geography skills. My students have very limited knowledge of maps and how they work; therefore to begin this part of the unit I will show them a variety of maps. Like in the poetry unit I will show them a wide variety of maps we use so that they have a few references to pull from when creating their own maps. We will look at these maps for their common characteristics as well as how they are different. I will ask the students to think about and discuss what the purpose of each map is, how each is useful and what each does not show us about the place it represents.

We will also talk about the basic characteristics of maps such as scale, and a map key. Although it will not be necessary for my students to have a key or other similar parts of a map I want them to know as much about maps as possible when they are creating their own. We will look at a subway map, a local bus map, a map of a hiking trail, a street map, a cultural demographic map, aerial photographs, as well as New Haven's Green Map. A list of resources I found useful for finding maps is in the appendix section of the unit.

I will expose my students to as many maps as I can. I want my students to have an awareness of all the ways one could potentially map an area. This will potentially bring a more authentic representation in their own maps of how they view their neighborhood.

Classroom Mapping Activity

After viewing these commercially produced maps we will begin to explore how we can create our own maps. As a pre-assessment I would ask the students to draw me a map of their favorite room. We will go back to mapping the neighborhood, but at this point I want to get an idea how the students are grasping the concept as well as what they will potentially struggle with. To help them I will give them an outlined template of a room and cut out shapes and home decorating catalogues, so that they do not have to be reliant on their drawing skills, but can simply paste representations of the objects that are in their room. We will share our attempts and celebrate them by beginning a "Map Wall" in our classroom, by hanging them where all of our maps will be displayed.

Then, I will begin by creating a large map of the classroom in which I have not labeled anything. I will show it

to the students and ask them if they can guess what I've mapped. When they realize what it is a map of, I will have them help me finish the map by labeling the areas, and pieces they find important and adding anything they feel was left out.

Here the students will go about creating their own maps of our classroom. I will take mine down, to discourage exact replicas and encourage the students to try to make the map the way they perceive the classroom rather than mimic my representation of it. Again, variety of materials will be available to the students, such as cutouts, magazines, photographs, various writing utensils, scissors and glue. This way students can create their map with the materials they feel most comfortable. When students feel satisfied with their final products we will look at the maps we created as a group and talk about how they are similar and different and what is special about each one. We will then add them to the "Map Wall" as well.

This exercise could be repeated with homes if students seem to be having difficulty with the concept. I would do the same lesson format, and simply change the area being mapped to each of our homes. This would allow the students to map something with a more complex thought process, as each map would be of a different place, and would need to be understood by viewers who had not been to that place. It also will give students a chance to map somewhere else and explore how the process could change when mapping a different, more complex place.

School Mapping Activity

I would then have the students work together to create a map of the school. They will each make individual sketches of what they think the map should look like and then we would compare and contrast these maps. To create our group map we would first take a few tours of the school as research. We would then go back to our original sketches and the notes from our tours and collaborate to create a large map of the layout of the school.

Creating this map we will need to collaborate, deciding what we should include and what we can omit. For this exercise we will use large, sturdy roll paper so that we can easily change the size of our map. We also will have the same materials to work with so that the end product most likely will be a combination of drawing and collage. This activity will be very similar to the classroom activity. The difference, however, will be that instead of each student creating their own map as a final product we will create a final product as a group.

Mapping Our Neighborhood

After we have finished these initial lessons, we will return to talking about the neighborhood, I will give the students an opportunity to create a map of their neighborhood, and explain to them that these second maps will be the ones that we share as a class to help us create our collaborative map. I may have the students simply sketch these initial maps as they are meant to be blueprints to work from and not actual final products. When the students have finished their second maps, we will compare them. We will observe which places each child has included or omitted, and talk about what from these maps needs to be included in our group map.

We then will take a tour of the neighborhood around the school. I hope to have parents involved in this part of the project. I believe strongly that our classroom community is incomplete without parent participation. With all projects and units I try to have parents aware of what their students are doing in school, and try to make as many opportunities for their participation in our activities as possible. This unit especially lends itself to parent participation as the neighborhood we are exploring is the parents as well as the students'. The parents will

often have insight into the history of their neighborhood, as well as what is available there, that I would not be able to get from an outside source.

Because I try to keep parents involved, the parents will most likely have been involved to some capacity with the unit thus far. They will be assisting with homework that is related, celebrating their child's poetry, discovering poetry with their child, and helping their child to learn about maps. In this section, however, parent participation is especially crucial.

I will invite all parents on this tour. The more parents who help escort the students the easier it will be. The parents will be there to talk to the students about what they see, and what is important. It will also make the tour much safer, as well as give the parents a chance to see their neighborhood in a new light. I plan on giving all the parents who participate a disposable camera, so that we can use their photos as a record of what to include, and possibly use them in our final map.

Upon returning to school we will discuss what we noticed and what we should include in our map that perhaps had been overlooked or unknown when we did our individual renditions. We will then collaborate by making a list of the places that need to be included in our map. We will create a large sketch of the basic street layout of the area and the Students will make recreations of the places we our going to include, and add them to the larger map. The students will work with a partner or very small group to create the portion they have been assigned. They can use all the materials we have used in previous maps. When they are finished with their portion, they can add it to the correct part of the map. We will finalize the map by labeling it, adding any extra touches, including the photographs and signing it. The students can talk about the experience to a partner or a parent and journal what they learned about maps and about their neighborhood.

Part Three: Community Project

Once we have begun to complete both the poetry and the mapping portions of the unit we will begin to plan for our presentation of our work. Ideally I would like to the students to help choose a place within the community that would be willing to display our work, where we could present some of the project (the group map of the neighborhood for example) as a gift. I think that to celebrate the community we need to work within it. However, a significant place in the surrounding city would be suitable if we were to display our work in more than one venue. I want the students to participate in the process of organizing and executing the presentation as much as possible so that they feel as if it is their creation and can truly celebrate their hard work. The students can decide how they would like to present, who will be invited, and how they will be invited and what the presentation should include. This is another area of the unit where parent participation will be extremely helpful, as parents can guide students in their decisions, assist with the execution of the presentation, support them during the process. There are a number of ways in which this type of activity can be successful. Unfortunately it is hard to plan beforehand, as location, timing, and who is involved is so specific to each teachers and communities resources and accessibilities. There is a list of ideas of possible venues, and presentations that would be appropriate culminating activities for this type of unit in the appendix section of this unit. As a teacher, the venue that I end up picking will be most appropriate if it is very accessible to students and parents, the outside organizations are enthusiastic and helpful, and it is somewhere the students feel comfortable and can feel that they are an important part of the community. If a venue is missing any of these elements, the experience may be more difficult than it is worth, and I would

encourage looking for one that has at least most of the criteria listed above.

I hope that this culmination of the unit will allow students to feel pride in sharing a project they worked hard on. I also hope that it will give them a sense of their potential to be an important member within their community, and how they can bring positive elements into their neighborhood. I also hope that it gives other members of the community a chance to know them and see their capabilities and potential. Seeing the final products of the students poems and maps will not only allow the adults involved to see the possibility in the students, but also to see how the children perceive the neighborhood, and perhaps get a new perspective on it themselves.

Conclusion

This unit is meant to create in the students a working knowledge of the community in which they live and the ability to express how they feel about it. It is my hope that through this careful observation of their neighborhood the students are able to realize what they believe is worth preserving, as well as what they would like to see change. This unit would be well suited to do in collaboration with older grades, and with teachers of art, gym, and music. It also lends itself to much parent participation. The more of the school community that is brought into working on the project, the more of a sense the students will get of how a community can work together to achieve positive results.

Appendix I Poetry Resources List

Eloise Greenfield, *Night on Neighborhood Street*, (Picture Puffins, 1991) This book is ideal for this unit! The poetry focuses on a predominantly African American, inner city neighborhood. The poems are written with a childlike voice, and the book has beautiful illustrations.

Jack Prelutsky, *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*, (Random House, 2001) This book has wonderful poetry of substance that is suitable for young children. It also contains a few poems about place that were especially useful. It has an entire section with poems about city which includes "City, City" by Marci Ridlon and "Sunrise " by Frank Asch which I have used successfully.

is a website that contains hundreds of poems which can be found by title, author and subject. I retrieved "City Trees" by Edna St. Vincent Millay on this website.

Appendix II Map resources

I was able to obtain many maps through the city tourist information center and public transportation systems. Here are a few websites that I also found useful.

Many types of maps in a format that is easy to navigate.

This site includes interactive maps, satellite imagery, and more.

Includes maps as well as information on demographics and geography of every country and many major cities.

This site is full of aerial and satellite photographs.

A page of the world's subway systems and their maps.

Appendix III Possible Culminating Activities

There are many places that would work for a venue to show the students work. These are just a few possibilities:

Senior Citizen Centers

Libraries

Hospitals or clinics

Other schools or Youth groups

Museums or Historical Societies

Possible activities could include:

A Poetry Reading or Slam

Displaying and explaining the maps

An interactive workshop with either mapping or poetry

Donating the work to the venue

A performance of the rhythm and movement pieces they created to go with other poets' poems.

These are only a few possibilities. There are many!

Reading List for Curriculum Unit: Knowing our Neighborhood

Teacher Resources

Tuan, Yi-Fu, *Space and Place* (1978) this book has wonderful insight into how we relate to place. It has an entire chapter devoted to children and how they relate to place.

Rusk, David, *Cities without Suburbs* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2003)

Von Hoffman, Alexander, *House by House, Block by Block: The Rebirth of America's Urban Neighborhoods* (Oxford University Press, 2003) An interesting look at how a variety of urban neighborhoods reinvented themselves and rejuvenated their communities through local grassroots efforts.

Alana Arnold and Melnick, Robert, editors, *Preserving Cultural Landscapes* (Johns Hopkins, 1999)

Hayden, Dolores, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (The MIT Press 1995)

Hayden ,Dolores, *Building Suburbia: Greenfields and Urban Growth* (vintage books, a division of Random House, Inc. New York, 2003)

Whiston Spirn Anne, *The Language of Landscape* , (Yale University Press, 1998)

Strand ,Mark and Evan Boland, *The Making of a Poem: A Norton Anthology of Poetic Forms* (W.W. Norton, 2000)

Weisbart, Jodi, *Joyful Ways to Teach Young Children to Write Poetry*, (Scholastic, 2001)

Student Resources

Literature about Place

Burton ,Virginia Lee, *The Little House* , (Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1942 renewed 1969)

Hoberman ,Mary Ann, *A House is a House for Me*, (Puffin Books 1982) Not only a wonderful book about the relationships between people, animals, things to places but also in a rhyming form that is much like poetry.

Viorst , Judith, *Alexander, Who's Not (Do you hear me? I mean it!) Going to move*, (First Aladdin Paperbacks, 1995) A book with whimsical repetition that talks about ones child's difficulty with leaving the places and community he considers home. My students were able to make real connections to Alexander when we read this aloud in class.

Lomas Garza ,Carmen, *A Piece of my Heart/ Pedacito de mi Corazon: The Art of Carmen Lomas Garza* (Laguna Gloria Art Museum, 1991)

Lomas Garza ,Carmen, *In My Family/ En Mi Familia* (Children's Book Press, 1996)

Yolen , Jane, *Letting Swift River Go* (Little, Brown and Company, 1992)

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