



Yale-New Haven  
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2006 Volume II: Latino Cultures and Communities

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## **Latino Visions: A Cultural Springboard for Reading**

Curriculum Unit 06.02.07

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### **Introduction**

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*Latino Visions: A Cultural Springboard for Reading* is a ten-day unit of study for children in grade three. The main goal of this unit is to summarize books with Latino themes, making it available on a regular basis to students learning to read. My goal will focus on three points. The first is to choose literature in which Latino children can identify with the characters and situations. The second is to emphasize similarities and differences across cultures helping all students to understand diverse cultures and gain a greater understanding of each other. The third is to use this culturally rich literature to explicitly teach guided reading.

Using Latino literature, I hope to improve the students' critical steps in developing comprehension when forming a general understanding, developing interpretation, making connections, and demonstrating a critical stance. I hope to construct meaning, to self-regulate learning and to entertain. The unit will improve students' performance on the Connecticut Mastery Test in reading by providing opportunities for the student to notice predictability of the text, compare the characters and setting, notice the similarity of the structure, and make comparisons between texts.

My unit will be taught in a self-contained third grade classroom at Conte West Hills School in New Haven, Connecticut. Most of the children are eight or nine years old with an occasional ten-year old. They come with a variety of home situations and differences in academic ability as well as considerable differences in general knowledge. They come from varied ethnic, economic and social backgrounds with many children not being read to at home. The demographics of New Haven Public Schools are approximately 55% African-American, 31% Latino, 11% Caucasian, 3% other. Approximately 30% of the students in third grade are in reading remediation programs.

## Unit Purpose

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For all children to learn, the achievement gap must be closed. A range of factors inhibits academic achievement: poverty, inadequate housing, high unemployment, poor health screening, the unavailability of quality health care, and the lack of commitment to universal preschool and Head Start programs. Educational policy and practice focuses overwhelmingly on academic achievement. However, this is only one element of student learning. As a teacher I need to look beyond the characteristics of students beyond my control to the content of learning. Recognizing that rich content that allows all students to see themselves as valued in the mirror of life and as having important stories to be told can be accomplished by the materials I choose to create challenging and engaging curriculum.

This unit is designed to provide background information on Latino communities and to teach children how to identify with the world around them in order to appreciate the similarities and differences to help understand how they fit into this world. The texts chosen for this unit have Mexican, Costa Rican, and El Salvadoran roots. In my summaries of these texts I have used the following criteria when choosing books for this unit. To begin with, all the books are well written and free of stereotypes and negative portrayals. The lifestyles of the characters are culturally accurate. Finally, the authors and illustrators chosen for this unit have the qualifications and background needed to deal with the cultural group with accuracy and respect.

## Integrating Latino Culture in the Classroom

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In 1968, Congress voted into law a proclamation, designating the week including September 15 and 16 as "National Hispanic Heritage Week", and calling upon the people of the United States, especially the educational community, to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies. In 1988, Congress passed an amendment changing "National Hispanic Heritage Week" to "National Hispanic Heritage Month." This celebration of Hispanic heritage begins on September 15 and ends on October 15. The following dates are of significant importance during the month. September 15th is Independence Day for five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence on September 16th and 18th respectively. Also included in this month is el Dia la Raza, or the Hispanic celebration of Columbus Day on October 12th.

Forty-one million people in the United States claim Latino origin. Celebrating the culture, achievement and promise of the Latino people during this month is important, but shouldn't be limited to one month a year. Learning about Latino Americans year-round is important to truly understand the history and future of this country. For this reason, I suggest infusing this unit throughout the year instead of relying on a month-long focus. Our national family has greatly benefited from the cultural infusion of many Latino practices that include strong work ethic, an undying appreciation and commitment to family, sincere patriotism, and respect for others. Integrating cultures in the classroom helps develop "ethnic history" in all students. My students need to develop multi-ethnic literacy, which fosters pride in one's own culture and a respect and appreciation for the uniqueness of others. All children benefit from learning about all kinds of children. Another benefit to integrated learning experiences is facilitating stronger communication between school and home. This approach extends a greater welcome to the parents in my school community. This cannot be limited to

confining cultural studies/literature into designated months of the year.

In the 1970s, the federal government coined the term Hispanic to group together a large and varied population. It refers to people who were born in any of the Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas. Some trace their roots from the cultures of the indigenous peoples of the Americas (Arawaks/Puerto Rico, Aztecs/Mexico, Incas/South America, Maya/Central America, Tainos/Cuba, Puerto Rico and other places), while others trace their roots from Spanish explorers who in the 1400s set out to find easier trade with the Indies. Still, others trace their roots to the Africans who were brought as slaves to the new world.

Most Latinos see themselves in terms of their individual ethnic identity, for example as Mexican Americans, Puerto Rican Americans, Cuban Americans, instead as members of the larger more ambiguous term Hispanic or Latino. The label Hispanic obscures the enormous diversity among people who come (or came) from two-dozen countries whose ancestry ranges from a mixture of Spanish blood with Native American, African, European to name a few. A common language binds most but many speak only English. Latinos often disagree on what they want to be called; most identify themselves by original nationality, while others prefer the term Latino. For this unit, I will use the nationality of origin or the term Latino to refer to these many ethnic groups most having some shared identity.

## Teaching Using Guided Reading Strategies

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Guided Reading is a teaching approach used in an instructional setting that enables a teacher to work with a small group of students (usually 4 to 6) to help students use effective strategies for processing text with understanding. It provides daily opportunity for teachers to help students purposely think their way through the text. Sometimes after reading the text the teacher extends the meaning of the text through written response. Guided reading enables students to become fluent, established readers. Learning how to read and reading to learn is inseparable.

Many of my students enter third grade with good decoding strategies. They can read with general accuracy just about anything you put in front of them (This is not true of the struggling readers of course). The aim of guided reading is to help students understand what they read. The goal of guided reading is to read increasingly sophisticated text, both fiction and non-fiction, and develop strategies the students can apply independently across the curriculum.

What does it mean to "read" a text? To read a text is to identify and understand the important information and to connect personally with such things as setting, character, and plot. Reading elicits a reaction to the text emotionally, perhaps experiencing humor, loneliness, hope, terror, or grief. A reader derives an author's precise meaning even when it's subtle or ironic. A reader can incorporate the meaning of the text into our own knowledge of the world and make inferences beyond the text.<sup>1</sup>

## Selection of Books

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Guided reading gives students the opportunity to read at the right instructional level. I've selected books with Latino themes based on students' reading abilities. These books have been chosen because I feel my students will enjoy them, find them interesting, and be able to relate to them.

When choosing these books I simultaneously considered my students' present strategies and their interests and background knowledge as well as the text complexity in relation to readers' skill to readers experience and the content of the text in relation to readers' background knowledge. I've analyzed the learning opportunities inherent in the texts and their match to instructional goals in addition to the quality of the text: language, illustrations, layout, and writing style.

To help students become successful readers, they need to be matched with the right books. New Haven Public Schools uses the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) to guide reading. The following is a correlation of grade level to reading level.

Grade 2: DRA Levels 18-28

Grade 3: DRA Levels 30-38

Grade 4: DRA Levels 40-44

## 4th Generation Connecticut Mastery Test Objectives for Reading

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When analyzing any text the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) objectives are a focus of instruction. When preparing the written response to the text the following third grade objectives were used.

Forming a General Understanding: Understanding the text's general content

A1 Determine the main idea (non-fiction) or theme (fiction) within the written work;

A2 Identify or infer important characters, settings, problems, events, and details;

A3 Select and use relevant information from the text in order to summarize events and/or ideas in the text;

A4 Use information from the text to make a prediction based on what is read; and

A5 Use content clues to determine meanings of unknown or multiple-meaning words.

Developing an Interpretation: Interpreting and/or explaining the text

B1 Identify or infer the author's use of structure/organizational patterns; and

B3 Use stated or implied evidence from the text to draw/or support a conclusion.

Making Reader/Text Connections: Connecting or associating the text with life outside the text.

C1 Make connections between the text and outside experiences and knowledge; and

C2 Select and use relevant information within a written work to write a personal response to the text.

Examining the Content and Structure: Elaborating on the text and making judgments about the text's quality and themes.

D1 Analyze and evaluate the author's craft, including the use of literary devices and textual elements;

D2 Select and use relevant information within a written work(s) to extend or evaluate the work(s);

D3 Demonstrate an awareness of an author's or character's customs and beliefs included in the text.

## **Latino Visions: Books for the Third Grade Classroom with Corresponding Written/Oral Response to Text**

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Looking for Uncle Louie on the Fourth of July by Kathy Whitehead (DRA 28-30)

This story takes place in southwest Texas at a Fourth of July celebration parade. The scene is set with a "conjunto" band playing the national anthem "hot like jalapenos". The young narrator, Joe, is wondering when his Uncle Louie will join them. Joe is afraid Uncle Louie will miss the whole parade. Then, a lowrider with the Statue of Liberty painted on its hood stops and the driver gets out. It's Uncle Louie and Joe gets a ride in his grand car. The artwork implies the family is from Mexican origin and the multinational individuals in the crowd are as visually interesting as the parade itself.

A2: What is Joe's main problem in the story?

A3: Briefly summarize the main events in the story in the order in which they occur.

B3: If you wanted to persuade someone that Joe is special to Uncle Louie, which examples from the story would you write about?

C1: Think about a time you had to wait for someone. Use information from the story and your own experience; explain how your experience was like or different from Joe's experience.

D1: Do you think that the author made the events in this story believable? Use details from the story to explain your answer.

D2: Using information from the text, write a paragraph that could have appeared in Joe's journal after the parade.

*Jalapeno Bagel* by Natasha Wing (DRA 30-34)

A story of a happy, hard-working family, Pablo must bring something from his family to share on International

Day. He considers several items from his family's bakery. Should he bring his father's bagels or challah bread or his mother's pan dulce or empanadas? Pablo helps his family make their specialty, jalapeno bagels a joint celebration from the cultures of both parents. Natasha Wing's affectionate portrayal of a mixed family is a wonderful book to show ethnically diverse families. This book includes a Yiddish and Spanish glossary and recipes.

A1: This book is called *Jalapeno Bagels* . What could be another title for it? Use details from the story to support your answer.

A2: Which word best describes Pablo. Use information from the story to support your answer.

A3: Explain why Pablo is having such a difficult time deciding what to bring for International Day.

B3: If you wanted to show that Pablo is proud of his heritage, which details from the text would you use?

C2: Which part of the story was most interesting or surprising. Use information from the story to support your answer.

D2: Chose the part of the story that you think was most important. Use details from the story to explain why you chose this part.

D3: How did Pablo's beliefs guide his actions?

*The Remembering Stone* by Barbara Timberlake Russell (DRA 34-38)

Ana and her mother live in an apartment in a diverse city. They watch a flock of blackbirds preparing for their journey south. Ana's mother was born in Costa Rica and dreams of returning someday. Everyone has dreams. Sophia, Ana's best friend, dreams of becoming an actress. Mr. Nyuyen, the Asian storekeeper dreams of bringing his family over to live. Mr. Hoffer, Mama's boss is a bad tempered man who Mama says has forgotten his dreams. What is Ana's dream? That night Ana takes out a stone pit from the great volcanoes of Costa Rica to help her remember her family's land. She places the stone under her pillow and imagines herself as a blackbird flying straight south to Costa Rica. She pictures the wonderful sounds, smells, and flavors. When she awakens, she touches the stone and begins to write down everything she can remember. Ana now knows her dream is to return to visit her grandparents and her beautiful Costa Rica with her Mama. This story is a celebration of hopes, dreams, and cultural routes. Children of immigrant families will recognize the closeness, the longing and the loss. The story is sprinkled with Spanish phrases and includes a brief glossary.

A1: What is this story mainly about?

A1: This story is called *The Remembering Stone* . What could be another title for it? Use details from the story to support your answer.

A2: How did Ana's feelings change throughout the story? Use information from the story to support your answer.

A3: What important facts about Costa Rica have you learned from this story?

B3: If you wanted to persuade someone that Costa Rica is a beautiful place, which examples from the story would you write about?

B3: You can tell from the information in this passage that Mama longs to return to Costa Rica. Give evidence to support this conclusion.

C1: Think about what this story says about people in general. In what ways does it remind you of people you know or have read about? Support your answer with evidence from the story.

C2: Which part of the story do you think was most important? Use information from the story and your own life to explain why you chose this part.

D1: Imagery is the use of words that make the reader imagine what characters see, hear, taste touch, or smell. Choose two words or phrases from the text that help you picture Costa Rica.

D2: Using information from the text, write a paragraph that could have appeared in Ana's journal after her dream.

*Super Cilantro Girl* by Juan Felipe Herrera (DRA 38-40)

Esmeralda Sinfronteras the young heroin in the story worries when her mother does not return home when expected. She is detained having crossed the border into Tijuana. Esmeralda carries a bouquet of cilantro leaves to her room and makes a wish. The next morning she goes to wash her hands and notices that they are green. Soon her whole body is green like cilantro leaves and she turns into a fifty-foot Super Cilantro Girl. She now can overcome all obstacles. She is a winning, super-hero in this bubbly tale about a child who rescues her mother. This book taps into the imagination and addresses the many concerns first generation children have about national borders and immigration status. This is a bilingual Spanish/English text.

A2: Which word would best describes Esmeralda? Use information from the story to support your answer.

A3: Write a brief summary of the story.

A4: If the author had added another paragraph to the story, it would most likely have described the \_\_\_\_\_.

B3: If you wanted to persuade someone that Esmeralda is a brave, which example from the story would you write about?

C1: Think about what this story says about people in general. In what ways does it remind you of people you have read about? Support your answer with evidence from the story.

C2: Which part of the story was most interesting or surprising? Use information from the story to support your answer.

D2: Using the information in the passage, write a paragraph that could have appeared in Esmeralda's journal.

D3: Why do you think the author chose to make Esmeralda a super hero?

*Xochitl and the Flowers* by Jorge Argueta (DRA 40-44)

Xochitl (pronounced "tsoa-chee-tal") Flores, whose name means, "flower" misses El Salvador, especially her family's flower business. The Flores family has moved from their native land to San Francisco. Xochitl and her parents struggle to make the transition from one culture to another and from a rural to urban environment. Xochitl is inspired to sell flowers in the city. Then her father finds an apartment with a garden and the family

builds a nursery. Most of the story is concerned with its fate at the hands of the unfeeling landlord and the community support that helps the Flores family keep their nursery. Although the story's conflict is far too easily resolved, its message is the strength of the community and the tale of immigrants adjusting to new surroundings. This is a bilingual Spanish/English text.

A2: What is Xochitl's main problem in the story?

A2: How did Xochitl's feelings change throughout the story? Use information from the text to support your answer.

A4: If the Flores family had not been allowed to keep their nursery, do you think Xochitl's feelings would be different at the end of the story? Use information from the story to explain your answer.

B3: Using details from the story, explain why you think the landlord didn't want the nursery?

C2: What information from the text do you think is most important? Use details from the passage to explain why you chose that information.

D2: Using the information in the text, write a paragraph that could have appeared in Xochitl's journal after the family opened the nursery.

D3: How did the Flores family's beliefs guide their actions?

## Latino Visions: Guided Reading Lessons

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The following is a basic outline of a ten-day guided reading lesson. Each of the above books will need to be read by the teacher and chunked into appropriate parts for discussions and comprehension. Most of the texts contain glossaries but you may want to review the text for unfamiliar vocabulary. Refer to the above written/oral response to text to complete the plan.

### Day 1 - Whole Class/Before Reading

Materials: chart paper, marker

Objective: The students will build background and create definitions for the words heritage, culture, and immigration.

Procedures:

I will spend some time building background with my students discussing the meanings of the terms heritage, culture, and immigration. We will make lists on chart paper of our discoveries.

Our discussion will begin with a sharing of traditions from our families. *What are some of traditions we have on special holidays? Are their special foods shared at different times of the year? Are their special places where people gather or remember their past?* From this discussion we will understand the meaning of heritage. The children will understand that heritage refers to something which is inherited from one's ancestors and can



have many meanings including cultural heritage, a nation's historic monuments, museums collections, etc. and traditions which are customs and practices inherited by our ancestors.

We will continue our discussion and focus on the meaning of culture. We will begin with talking about American culture. *What do we like to do? How do we dress? What are some of our routines? How might other people in the world be the same or different from us?* From this discussions we will conclude that culture is the entire way of life of a particular people, including it's customs, religions, ideas, inventions, and tools.

As we discuss different cultures, I will guide our discussion to how the United States is a melting pot of many different cultures because people have come here from all over the world. This will lead to a discussion of the term immigration. Immigration is the act of relocating to another country or region. An immigrant is a person who intends to stay long-term (often forever), in contrast to a casual visitor or traveler. I will briefly talk with the students about the reasons people immigrate without going into too much detail. People immigrate for the following reasons: economic (to escape poverty, seek prosperity, work to send money back to their family/friends in their native country, find employment, get an education), persecution/oppression (to escape dictatorship or other unfair government, not allowed to practice their own religion), national disasters (earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, etc.), personal reasons (to be with a family or loved one, to retire, for better weather, lower living costs).

## **Day 2 - Introducing the Text**

Objective: The students' curiosity will be aroused and they will build interest for the text.

Materials: Individual texts, Reading Response Journals (notebooks)

Procedures:

The students will be grouped for small-group instruction. The similar reading level, reading behaviors and, instructional needs, will group them homogeneously. The above books are generally within the range of the students in my classroom. The guided reading groups have from four to six students and so an equal amount of that particular text is needed. I will have 5 different reading groups. The small-group sessions will last for 20-minute. I will meet with three groups per day, rotating the groups.

- Distribute the book and discuss the cover.  
*Let's read the title together. What's the setting? Who do you think the main character is?*
- Discuss the summary on the book jacket.  
*What will this book be about?*
- Turn to the title page. Have students read the book title and the name of the author and illustrator. Have them exchange ideas about the illustration.
- Turn to the first page of the story. Then encourage further exploration, having students commenting on the illustrations and the text.

Open your reading response journals. Write the title, author and today's date. Write your predictions.

### Culminating Project Choices

During this two-week period each small group will plan a special presentation of their book for the rest of the class. They will work on this presentation during center time. The following are presentation choices.

- Group mural - Students will create a mural showing the highlights or sequence of the story.
- Drama - Students will write a script and reenact all or a part of the story.
- Puppet Theater - Students create puppets and use them to tell the story.
- Choral Reading - Students read the story or part of the story aloud for the rest of the class.

Materials: chart paper, mural paper, paint, markers, construction paper, pencils, glue, and Popsicle sticks.

### Day 3 - Reading the Text

Objective: The students will read the text orally and silently.

Materials: Individual texts, Reading Response Journals, poster board (optional)

Procedures:

- Have the students read silently to themselves. Have them stop at the designated page you chose and review what's happened so far. Then, have them continue reading. Invite individual students to read aloud to you. Provide assistance as needed.
- Have students go back and revise their predictions.
- Have the students locate the state or country in which the story takes place or originates on a map. Assign the students to draw a map of the country or state in their Reading Response Journals. An alternative idea would be to assign each group to make a large map on poster board to share with the class when they make their presentations.

### Day 4 - Discussing the Text

Objective: The students show an understanding of the text through discussion and reading response.

Materials: Individual texts, Reading Response Journals

Procedures:

- Because of the length of the book, you may need to discuss the story in more than one session, or only discuss certain pages in a small-group session. Make sure students understand the main idea.
- Assign a written response question to the group or pair the students to work on different questions together.

### **Day 5 and 6 (if needed) - Continue Reading and Discussing the Text**

Procedures:

- Follow the procedures on Day 3 and 4

### **Day 7 - Follow Up**

Objective: The students will make connections to other texts read and read with fluency.

Materials: Individual texts

Procedures:

- Have students reread the book thinking about how it's similar or different from other stories they've read.
- Lead students to realize that, although stories may be about different things, they often have similar structures. Recognizing the structure can help them with comprehension and making predictions.
- Fluency - Organize students for partner reading. Ask them to decide who will read first. Then have them read alternate pages aloud.

### **Day 8 -Revisiting the Text**

Objective: The students will gain a better insight into the meaning of the text.

Materials: Individual texts

Procedures:

- Have student read the book independently and meet together on several occasions to discuss the story. Join in the discussion to model effective way to explore literature.  
*Who is/are the central character(s) of this story? What problem does the main character face?*

*What does the main character learn from his/her experience?*

## **Day 9 - Reinforcing the Text**

Objective: The students will conclude how characters in the story change.

Materials: Individual texts, chart paper

Procedures:

- Talk about the main character. Have students come up with words to describe the main character and how he or she changes as the story progresses. Chart ideas.

At the Beginning In the Middle At the End

Day 10 - Whole Group Share/Culminating Activity

Objectives: The small-groups will share their presentations with the rest of the students.

Materials: chart paper, marker

Procedures:

- Each group will prepare a 10-12 minute presentation chosen on Day 2.
- After the presentations the class will compare and contrast the stories.

## **Notes**

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1Fountas, Irene C. and Pinnell, Gay Su, *Guiding Readers and Writers* , (Heinmann, Portsmouth, NH, 2001) 190.

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Banks, James A. *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies 6th Edition* . A Viacom Company, Needham, MA. 1997.

Connecticut State Department of Education. *Developing a Multicultural Curriculum* . July 2004.

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Fountas, Irene C. and Pinnell, Gay Su. *Guided Readers* . Heinmann, Portsmouth, NH. 1995.

Fountas, Irene C. and Pinnell, Gay Su. *Guiding Readers and Writers* . Heinmann, Portsmouth, NH. 2001.

Kozol, Jonathan. *The Shame of a Nation* . Crown Publishing Group/Random House, New York, NY. 2005.

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Casilla, Robert. *Jalapeno Bagels* . Atheneum Books for Young Reader, New York, NY. 1996.

Herrera, Juan Felipe *Super Cilantro Girl* . Children's Book Press, San Francisco, CA. 2003.

Russell, Barbara Timberlake *The Remembering Stone* . Melanie Kroupa Books, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, NY. 2004.

Whitehead, Kathy *Looking for Uncle Louie on the Fourth of July* . Boyd Mills Press, Inc., Honesdale, PA. 2005.

## Annotated Children's Bibliography of Books with Latino Visions

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Alarcon, Francisco X. *From the Belly Button of the Moon and Other Poems* . Children's Book Press, San Francisco, CA. 1998.

A bilingual collection of memoir poems in which the author, Francisco. X. Alacon, a Mexican American, revisits and celebrates his childhood.

Alvariz, Julia. *The Secret Footprints* . Dell Dragonfly Books, New York, NY. 2000.

This is a Dominican folktale about a tribe of underwater people whose feet are attached backward, with toes pointing in the directions from which they came from.

Argueta, Manlio. *Magic Dogs of the Volcanoes* . Children's Book Press, San Francisco, CA. 1990.

This folktale is about two ancient volcanoes in El Salvador that aid the magic dogs in protecting the village.

Castaneda, Omar S. *Abuela's Weave* . Lee & Low Books, Inc., Boston, MA. 1993.

This is the story of the relationship between a young Guatemalan girl and her grandmother as they weave together and make a trip to the market to sell their wares.

Cisneros, Sandra. *Hairs* . Dragonfly Books/Alfred A. Knoph, New York, NY. 1994.

In this picture book, a child describes how each person in the family has hair that looks and acts differently. This is a vignette from Sandra Cisneros best selling book *The House on Mango Street* .

Collard III, Sneed B. *The Forest in the Clouds* . Charlesbridge Publishing, Watertown, MA. 2000.

This non-fiction picture book describes some of the exotic plants and animals that live in the cloud forest of Costa Rica. This book also discusses some of the environmental problems this area is encountering. This book would be a good accompaniment to *The Remembering Stone* by Barbara Timberlake Russell.

Gonzalez, Lucia M. *The Bossy Gallito*. Scholastic Inc., New York, NY 1994.

This translated Cuban folktale features a rooster on his way to a wedding.

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Calling the Doves* . Children's Book Press, San Francisco, CA. 1995.

This is a personal memoir of Juan Felipe Herrera's childhood in the mountains of California with his farm worker parents.

Jaffee, Nina. *The Golden Flower: A Taino Myth from Puerto Rico* . Pinata Books, Houston, TX. 2005.

This Taino myth explains the origin of the forest, the sea, and the island.

Maggi, Maria Elena. *The Great Canoe: A Karina Legend* . Groundwood Books/Douglas & McIntyre, Toronto, Ontario. 2002.

This book is translated from Spanish and is a retelling of a Karina tale that sets the story of Noah's Ark in the New World. The Karina's are descendants of an indigenous nation that before the Spaniards came, occupied eastern Venezuela. The Spaniards called them Carib Indians.

Mora, Pat. *Tomas and the Library Lady* . Dragonfly Books/Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY. 1997.

Tomas helps his family in their work as migrant workers far from the home, in doing so he discovers an entire world to explore through the books in the library.

Paulsen, Gary. *The Tortilla Factory* . Voyager Books, Harcourt Brace & Company, New York, NY. 1995.

Gary Paulsen uses simple prose to tell young readers how corn seeds eventually become a tortilla.

Ramirez, Michael Rose. *The Legend of the Hummingbird: A Tale from Puerto Rico* . Mondo Publishing, New York, NY. 1998.

In this Puerto Rican legend, a boy and a girl from rival tribes have their love protected and immortalized when they are changed into a red flower and a hummingbird.

Robleda, Margarita. *Maria: A Latina Girl in the United States* . Santillana USA Publishing Company, Inc., Miami, FL. 2005.

This is the story of 11-year-old Maria who was born in the USA into a family of Mexican immigrants. She writes her autobiography and in it emphasizes the advantages of being bilingual and bicultural.

Sota, Gary. *Chato and the Party Animals* . Penguin Young Readers Group, New York, NY. 2000.

Chato the cat decides to throw a birthday party for his friend Novio boy who has never had a party before.

Torres, Leyla. *The Kite Festival* . Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, NY. 2004.

Fernando and his family are on a Sunday ride to the town of San Vicente, Columbia. There they encounter a kite festival. By using ingenuity and recycled objects they manage to construct a kite so they can join in and win the prize for the most original kite.

Van Lann, Nancy. *The Magic Bean Tree: A Legend from Argentina* . Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, MA. 1998.

This legend is about a young Quechua Indian boy in South America who sets out on his own to bring back rain to his homeland. He is rewarded by a gift of carob beans that come to be cherished in Argentina.

Wallner, Alexandra. *Sergio and the Hurricane* . Henry Holt and Company, New York, NY. 2000.

Sergio, a young boy learns how dangerous a hurricane can be when it comes to his oceanfront home in Puerto Rico.

Williams, Karen Lynn. *Tap-Tap* . Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, NY. 1994.

A Haitian mother and daughter have enough money to ride the tap-tap after selling oranges in the market. A tap-tap is a multi-colored hand painted truck that picks up passengers and lets them off when they hang on the side of the vehicle.

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