



## **Melting Pot Theater: Teaching for Cultural Understanding**

Curriculum Unit 90.02.11

by Bill Derry

In all ways of learning, the more active the learner the better. As far as possible, passivity must be discouraged and overcome. This does not mean more activity on the part of the teacher, but a different kind of activity from that which most teachers now display when they go on the assumption that teaching is transferring the contents of their own minds (or their notes) into the minds of their pupils. <sup>1</sup>

I am an Itinerant Arts Teacher on the Comprehensive Arts Program. I work with teachers and students in grades Kindergarten through Fifth. I also facilitate a city wide arts program, placing an artist in each of the 225 K-2 classrooms and providing a performance in each of the 25 elementary schools.

As an Arts Teacher I use Drama as a “teaching tool.” Most often I use Drama in conjunction with Language Arts Performance Objectives. In a typical six session unit each session has a “theme”: Feelings, Senses, Movement, Make Believe, Listening, Playmaking. The emphasis in each Drama session is on getting students to speak and move within a “real” context. For example a student in a statue expressing anger would be asked, “Why do you feel so angry?”, and might respond with, “I feel angry because my bike was stolen!”. The student could replay the response with more feeling in the voice or more appropriate body movements.

Sometimes these beginning drama sessions lead to activities which are related to the content being taught by the teacher. (“The Community”, “Regions of the World”, “Seasons”, and “The History of New Haven” are a few examples of different areas of the curriculum taught through Drama.) This unit is designed to work with the school system’s Performance Objectives. It has a flexible structure designed to be adaptable to teachers’ styles and overall school objectives.

The title of this curriculum unit contains the phrase “Melting Pot Theater”. This phrase refers to the creation of a performance through the integration of many subject areas (including Language Arts, Social Studies, Music, Visual Arts, and Drama) with many resources (school and community artists and arts teachers, guest speakers, audio-visual aids, computer programs, literature on Drama and the cultures selected for study). The primary purpose of this unit is to integrate (melt together) many curricular areas with many resources into a student performance.

The other purpose of this unit is to address the issue of multiculturalism in America, and how much children should learn about minority cultures. An insightful article in the Village Voice entitled, “Who’s America is This, Anyway?”, discusses a 1990 New York city report calling for a “curriculum of inclusion”. The report states that

“the multicultural approach is seen as serving the interests of all children from all cultures: children from [minority] cultures will have higher self-esteem and self-respect, while children from European cultures will have a less arrogant perspective of being part of the group that has ‘done it all.’”<sup>2</sup> This article provides negative and positive criticism from writers of six major U.S. newspapers and the President of the American Federation of Teachers.

New Haven has many different cultural groups and much is presently done in some schools to promote student awareness of cultural differences and similarities. I think that the more experience a student has with different customs and points of view, the more flexible he or she will be when confronted with differing opinions, attitudes and customs. Whether a school system is made up of a variety of minority groups or not, the United States is a multicultural society. America is based on principles which take into account peoples different points of view. A Eurocentric curriculum does not always accurately teach an understanding of the values of cultural diversity and common history.<sup>3</sup>

Although this unit stresses the melting together of various disciplines, it is not designed to melt the cultures together into one culture. It is intended that each culture will be studied and valued for its unique and individual characteristics—and that what will be stressed is the importance of each culture maintaining these characteristics while sharing some common traits.

I have chosen three cultures to study: Puerto Rico; Russia, U.S.S.R.; and Ghana, Africa. Since many of our students in New Haven are from, or have parents from Puerto Rico, it was a natural choice. Most children do not even realize that Puerto Ricans are not foreigners! I chose Russia for many reasons. Until recently Russia was rarely available for in-depth study. The word “Russia” evoked fear and blank images. Many people, including myself, have visited the Soviet Union and found a different reality than expected. Russia, although one republic of the U.S.S.R., has problems of its own in coming to terms with the one hundred ethnic groups found in the Soviet Union. Between 1820 and 1987 nearly 3.5 million people have immigrated from the U.S.S.R., providing the 6th largest percentage of total U.S. immigrants.<sup>4</sup> Ghana was chosen for many reasons as well. The majority of our students are Afro-Americans, many of whom can trace their heritage back to West Africa. There are also local artists and teachers in New Haven from Ghana who could be hired to work with students. The unit will provide more opportunities to focus on the many contributions of Afro-Americans.

## **PROPOSED AUDIENCE AND TIME FRAME FOR UNIT**

---

This curriculum unit has been developed for students in grades 1-4 in a new elementary magnet school, The Language Academy. The school will provide foreign language instruction and multi-cultural experiences. It will be implemented over eight weeks in seven classrooms; two First Grades, two Second Grades, two Third Grades and one Fourth Grade. This curriculum unit is NOT designed specifically for the Drama teacher, but is designed for use by a teacher with some experience in the use of Drama who is in a “support” position, i.e., a Curriculum/Staff Developer, a Visual Arts teacher, a Music teacher, a Library/Media Specialist, etc. The person who implements this unit must have an overall picture of the whole project and be willing to coordinate all who are involved. This person will be akin to the Producer of a production, although s/he must be prepared to direct a great deal. The person in charge must select classroom teachers based solely on their desire and commitment to be in the project. The Project Leader or Producer will try to get the teachers to have as much input as possible, but must be prepared to provide ideas, resources and support.

## OBJECTIVES

---

This unit will NOT include as a purpose or objective, “to learn about THEATER”—but will emphasize the use of Drama as an educational tool. I am most interested in Drama as CONTEXT, as the medium within which learning can take place. This CONTEXT can be applied to an infinite variety of CONTENTS. The content I have chosen for this unit is multiculturalism. I think that Drama is a particularly good tool to use when teaching multiculturalism, since it allows students to learn through action and experience.

After students have completed this unit they will be able to:

1) Define culture. “The culture of a particular group is its total way of life. It includes all the things the group as a whole thinks, believes, and does. To study a group’s culture is to study its art, literature, religion, philosophy, sports, clothing, politics, customs, and habits. We may speak of the culture of a country (American culture), the culture of a region of the world (Southeast Asian Culture), or the culture of a racial group (black culture). A culture that is especially large and complex is called a civilization.”<sup>5</sup>

2) Identify at least three cultures which have helped to make up the U.S.A.

3) Count from one to ten in each of the following languages:

Spanish, the language of Puerto Rico (U-no, DOS, TRES, CUAT-tro, CINC-o, SEIS, si-ET-e, O-cho, nu-EV-e, di-EZ);

Twi, a language of one group of people in Ghana (o-HUN, BAA-ko, MI-enu, Mi-EN-sa, E-NAN, E-num, N-sia, N-son, nMOU-cha, Nk-RON, E-du);

Russian, the official language of the U.S.S.R. (ah-DEEN, dvah, tree, chih-TEE-reh, pyaht, shayst, seeaym, VOH-seeaym, DYEH-veht, DYEH-seht).

4) Locate on a map the continents of North America, Europe, Asia, Africa and South America.

5) Locate on a map the U.S.A., Puerto Rico, the U.S.S.R. and the republic of Russia, and Ghana in West Africa.

6) Tell at least two folk tales, each from a different culture.

7) Sing at least two songs from two different cultures.

8) Name at least 2 natural resources from each culture studied.

9) Identify traditional folk music of Puerto Rico, Russia, and Ghana.

10) Draw three different scenes which could each be identified as being one of the cultures studied.

11) Take part in a performance which will focus on some aspects of life in Russia, Puerto Rico, and Ghana.

12) Demonstrate pride in their performance, and their classmates’ performance.

## STRATEGIES

---

First, the coordinating teacher must *determine the players* . In this unit the following key people are assumed to be included: the coordinator (in this case, played by myself—as Itinerant Arts teacher in Drama), the Music teacher, the Physical Education teacher, seven classroom teachers and their students. The idea should be presented at a staff meeting to consult with every teacher and the principal. Each player should make a verbal and written commitment to the project.

Second, *define the roles of each player* . Some of the definitions will be based upon individual teachers' strengths and weaknesses. In my model I am assuming, for example, that the Physical Education teacher has experience in dance. I am also assuming that each classroom teacher is willing and able to carry out Visual Arts activities with her students. Visual Arts consultants from the Comprehensive Arts Program would probably be available for assistance in designing lessons, if help is needed.

Each teacher will choose one of the three cultures (Puerto Rico, Ghana, or Russia). The fourth grade class will become specialists from an “alien” culture who study other cultures; Anthropologists, Scientists, Psychologists, Historians, Language Specialists, Economists, etc. This improvisational Drama in Education technique, called “Mantle of the Expert”, was developed by Dorothy Heathcote. It allows students to assume an expert role within which to work in a drama.<sup>6</sup> They will eventually interact with the six other classes and help to create the necessary TENSION in the final production.

For eight weeks each class will be immersed in the study of the chosen culture or dramatic mode. The Music teacher will teach songs of each culture; the Physical Education teacher will teach a dance from each culture; the classroom teachers will determine content and prepare whole group, small group and individual instruction for their students; the classroom teacher will be responsible for all costumes and scenery for their class' dramatized section; the Drama teacher will work with each group on creating a play which fits into a “story” that all seven classes will produce, will consult with teachers and assist with costume and scenery ideas, and will bring in several specialists to work with the teachers and their students.

Third, *determine the content to be taught* . Using the resources presented in this unit, as well as other resources with which the teachers are familiar, each teacher must determine the song, the folk tale, the natural resources, etc. of the culture being taught. The chart, *Areas of Culture and Content* , included with this unit should be helpful.

Fourth, *determine the specific activities* to be performed in each group. A master-schedule should be created by all participating teachers charting the activities and dates for the project. (See the *SAMPLE MASTER-SCHEDULE* in this unit.) Activities should be identified as whole group, small group or individual instruction. Existing filmstrips, video tapes, recordings, 16mm films and other audiovisual aids will be identified that are presently in the New Haven Public Schools. (See Bibliography) The project participants will determine to which of three instructional categories these resources best lend themselves. When group decisions become difficult, the coordinator should come to a decision and consult the entire group for feedback, changes or agreement.

Whole group instruction will be used for background information on each culture—teaching the students to count from 1-10 in the language of the culture they are studying, teaching songs, telling folk tales, and teaching a dance. Each group will watch a video and/or filmstrip on the culture they are studying. Drama activities will be conducted with every class. Each group will begin this curriculum unit by creating a culture of

its own. Students will use a dramatic mode to set up a “typical” shop or marketplace for each culture. They will make their own “play” money in the correct currency of the culture, and use it to purchase goods.

Rehearsals for the play will take place in each classroom, but will move to a large space, where each group will have a part to play in the final production. The Coordinator/Drama teacher will focus on the kind of drama done by Dorothy Heathcote in which teachers are guided to find material, select symbols, achieve dramatic focus, heighten tension, and slow pace to lead children to significant moments of insight. <sup>7</sup> The group which creates the “alien” roles will serve as the storytellers in the final performance. (See the Sample Lesson Plans, Sample Script and Bibliography for assistance on these projects.)

The final performance will be done for other students, teachers and their parents. This will help solidify the information learned and provide students with the experience of teaching through performance. It will also serve to bring the school and community together and create a greater sense of individual pride and a larger sense of school pride.

Small group instruction will take place with projects such as flag making, papier m%oché map making, and scenery building. Small groups will work on recipes to create foods from the cultures being studied. Parents will be requested to assist with this part of the project.

Individual instruction will occur for remediation and enrichment, and for help on individual projects that students will create. Cassettes or records with music from the culture(s) being studied will be made available for individual listening. Although students will learn to count in large groups, they will be able to practice by themselves with cassette tapes and headphones. Students can listen to their classroom teacher counting from 1-10 in the language of the culture they are studying. A small library of books, maps, and pamphlets will be collected for individual student perusal.

Fifth, *meet regularly to evaluate* . The Coordinator/Drama teacher and the participating teachers need to meet at least one time every two weeks, to check progress, share notes on the direction of the production and change direction if necessary. These meetings should be included on the master schedule.

## **SOME DRAMA IN EDUCATION TECHNIQUES**

---

The most important single factor in the use of drama as a genuine part of education is the teacher. It would be preposterous to pretend that a teacher needs no preparation for doing drama—but it is equally preposterous to suggest that a teacher who sees the values of using drama needs a course in theater. <sup>8</sup>

The aim is constant: to develop people, not drama. By pursuing the former, the latter may also be achieved; by pursuing the latter, the former can be totally neglected, if not nullified. <sup>9</sup>

Games provide one of the easiest entry points into the world of Drama in Education. Drama games come with rules and boundaries built into them. Viola Spolin, Nellie McCaslin, Geraldine Siks, and Brian Way offer many games which can be used to promote concentration, involve creative movement of the body, improve language skills, and promote groups working together. The game for this unit involves identifying feelings, which are found in people of all cultures. (See Sample Lesson 1)

Creative Drama involves the use of the body and voice in authentic responses to sounds, stories, words, images and/or ideas. The teacher provides stimuli through storytelling, games and a variety of drama techniques described in this section. The process is more important than the product, although the product may be shared with an audience. Creative Drama addresses individual and group creative expression and is particularly useful for getting students working together. When applied to a curriculum area it is often referred to as Integrated Drama. (See Sample Lesson 2)

Dance focuses on the movement education of the body. Often a teacher need only be shown dance steps by an “expert” to teach the dance to his or her students. Pantomime would be included as a component of dance. Understanding non-verbal signals or body language is particularly important when verbal communication is not possible, as is true with people who do not understand each other’s language. Dances from other cultures often serve as a bridge to communication. (See Sample Lesson 3)

The use of a person in role is a powerful teaching tool. The teacher, a visitor or a student(s) can assume the role of a person or group, taking on a specific attitude or set of information. An example in this unit is a man from Ghana, acting as tribal chief of a member of the Ashanti tribe. His attitude being: “The moderniza-tion of Ghana is causing the ruin of our people.” Students are confronted with a “real” person to question, and are forced to use feeling and thought. Assuming a role is a common technique used in the teaching of Dorothy Heathcote. (See Sample Lesson 4)

Improvisation is the spontaneous acting out of a situation, often including language. Viola Spolin has been a leading advocate of this method of drama and has several good books for teachers, actors and directors. In this unit students will use a form of improvisation to create a culture of their own. This will give them a foundation from which to view other “real” cultures. (See Sample Lesson 5)

There are several units created by previous members of the Yale New Haven Teachers Institute which provide many drama activities for classroom teachers. The problem is not in finding the activities, but rather in finding the merit in using them. If a teacher sees the merit in the use of Drama, he or she will seek out the “experts” who are listed in this bibliography and the bibliographies of many other such units. This curriculum unit assumes the teacher using it is willing to start from where they are and work towards creating more literate students—not towards creating student actors.

## **THE IDEA OF DRAMA AS CONTEXT**

---

I have already stated the fact that Drama in this unit will be used as context. It needs further explaining, if this unit is to be implemented. Although I am suggesting some of the content to be taught, I am not concerned about the many facts which could be taught. I trust that the books and resources listed in the bibliographies and the abilities of the teachers involved in this project will provide more than enough content. The following quote is from the “Bible” of the Foreign Language Department:

Many teachers are afraid to teach culture because they fear that they don’t know enough about it. Seelye(1984) maintains that even if teachers’ own knowledge is quite limited, their proper role is not to impart facts, but to help students attain the skills that are necessary to make sense out of the facts they themselves discover in their study of the target culture. He points out that the objectives that are to be achieved in cross-

cultural understanding involve processes rather than facts. Facts are cheap. They are also meaningless until interpreted within a problem-solving context. <sup>10</sup>

The context which will be created to hold some of the content taught in this unit will be the “script” used for the culminating activity—the performance. The script will be “better” if it includes a plot, tension, characters, and a climax. As described in the “Master Schedule”, the script is created by the group working on the project. If the class studying Puerto Rico focuses on the bizarre Festival of the Masks, an annual island festival, then they, with the help of their teacher, could create a short scene where a family is preparing for the event.

In order to provide a concrete example of what I mean I have created a “Sample Script” which has spaces that must be filled by specific classes. The script could be used as a starting point for the project or thrown out entirely in favor of a different set of characters and situations. This script is not complete! The tension in the script will be created from the juxtaposition of very different cultures: the alien culture, created by the fourth grade and the three cultures being studied by the other six classes: Puerto Rico, Russia and Ghana. (Following is a “Sample Content Chart”, a “Sample Script”, a “Sample Master Schedule”, and five “Sample Lesson Plans”.)

## AREAS OF CULTURE AND CONTENT

---

*(figure available in print form)*

### **SAMPLE SCRIPT: When Cultures Collide**

*Time* : The Present

*Plot Synopsis* : Action begins on an Alien Space/Time Ship. The ship runs out of fuel. Three groups of aliens head off to Earth in three small exploratory vessels in search of fuel. Each group is lead by a high ranking alien official. One group goes to Puerto Rico, another to Russia, and the third to Ghana. They are able to learn languages quickly, but they do not fully comprehend everything they see and hear. They become intrigued by the people and ask questions. They share stories, songs, dances and other customs. The leader of the aliens can meet the leader of each culture. Each group collects the energy from emotions released by the people they visit in their fuel collectors. (This idea is based on the thought that feelings and emotions are something that is shared by every culture, regardless of differences—I would discuss this with students, and see if they had an idea they liked better.) As the aliens collect emotion they also begin to speak with more emotion.

*Characters* : (Only a sampling of some of the possible characters. It is best not to get bogged down with long segments of drama with only a few characters interacting. The play is built around group scenes.)

ALIEN SHIP

*Entire 4th Grade:*

Aztecala-alien leader

Leader 2

Leader 3

Leader 4

Pozxter-wise person

Captain of Ship

Time Expert

Space Expert

Artist, Dancer

Food Grower

Doctor

PUERTO RICO

*One First Grade:*

Current Leader of Puerto Rico

Group of story-tellers: JUAN BOBO

*One Third Grade:*

A group of singers

*Other possible parts:*

A family going to an open air market

Group of dancers

Group of workers

RUSSIA

*One Second Grade:*

Group of storytellers: BABA YAGA

One Third Grade

Current Leader of Russia

A group of dancers

*Other possible parts:*

A family

A group of collective farmers

GHANA

*One First Grade*

Current Leader of Ghana

A group of story-tellers: ANANSE

*One Second Grade:*

A family buying goods in market

*Other possible parts:*

Group of farmers

Group of dancers

Group of miners

(In order to condense this sample script within the unit, I have single spaced. When creating the script for teachers and students there should be spaces between the parts of the different characters.)

(All ALIEN characters MUST speak without emotion!)

AZTECALA: How much further can we go, Captain?

CAPTAIN: Queen Aztecala, the fuel is almost empty! We must refuel.

TIME EXPERT: I am the time expert and I know that we have 31 seconds of fuel remaining!

SPACE EXPERT: I am the space expert and I know that we can travel another 1 million miles in 31 seconds!

AZTECALA: What can we do, oh POZXTER the WISE?

POZXTER: My built-in computer shows that we can find fuel on that planet. (Points outside spaceship. A slide of Earth can be projected on a screen for the audience to see.) It is called Earth by the people who live there. We will have to search for fuel.

LEADER 1: Remember we must not harm one thing or we will lose our space driver's license.

LEADER 2: Even though we will be invisible, if our power goes, we will become visible. We must look like these earthlings if we are to not frighten them. LEADER 3: POZXTER, can you get us some pictures of these earthlings on our screen?

(Various pictures of people in the different classes are shown on the screen. The aliens are frightened by how scary they are.)

LEADER 1: Lucky that we saw them in advance. They are very scary.

AZTECALA: Scientists—please make us look like the Earthlings.

SCIENTIST 1: Are you sure you want to do this? ARTIST: Maybe it is better to run out of fuel!

POZXTER: There!! (Pozxter lifts his arms; special sound effects; most of the students take off "ugly" alien masks and costumes—they are transformed into Earthlings. They continue to wear something which identifies them as "aliens", i.e., green pointed hats, silver shirts, big red dots on

the back of their costumes, etc.) Remember with those “hats” on you will not be visible. You will go to different places on the planet. Gather as much information as you can while you are there.

BOOK WRITER: Oh yes! I will write a book on this planet Earth.

CAPTAIN: We will take three small ships and travel to . . .

POZXTER: Just make sure you stay on land. Much of this planet is covered with water—and you know how dangerous that is for us!

FOOD GROWER: My great grandmother said her sister fell into a pond on a purple planet! She just disappeared! I would never touch water.

AZTECALA: Of course no one would be stupid enough to touch water! Let’s go! (The issue of not touching water is filled with tension and could be developed to heighten dramatic tension.)

POZXTER: Everyone! Pick up a fuel collector on your way onto the ship. Keep your fuel collector on at all times! When they are full return to the ship!

NARRATOR: (Can be one person at a microphone, a small group, or entire class doing choral speaking.) The three groups of aliens traveled in their small ships to three different places on the planet Earth. One group landed in a small town on the island of Puerto Rico in the Caribbean. Another group landed in the outskirts of Moscow in Russia. The third group landed in Ghana in a small village near the city of Tamale. Let us go to Africa and find out how this group is doing. (During this talk, slides of maps are projected on the screen so the audience can see where the space ships land. If a camera is available students or teachers can make the slides, using slide film, and maps from books or the large maps usually found in classrooms.)

(The aliens have landed outside an elementary school in Ghana. All students are in school uniforms and the teacher is teaching the class in English, the official language of Ghana.)

Leader 1: Look! They are all wearing the same costumes, like us!

Leader 2: Our clothes are not costumes!

Teacher: One group has created a play based on the Ananse story, *Why Spiders Live in Dark Corners*. Now we will watch them act it out.

GRADE ONE: DRAMATIZE ANANSE STORY.(See Lesson Plan #1 for this project.)

ALIEN 1: That will be a good one to tell back on the ship.

ALIEN 2: Who would have thought that was the reason why spiders live in dark corners.

ALIEN 3: That Ananse Spider is a real trickster.

LEADER 1: Look at our fuel collectors. We collected a lot of fuel already. Look over there.

ALIEN 1: It looks like they are exchanging goods. Listen! Sounds like a good place to bring our fuel collectors!

GRADE TWO: DRAMATIZE MARKET SCENE (Improvise—See Drama Bibliography)

NARRATOR: The aliens filled their fuel collectors and made their way back to their space ship. Let us go to the group in Russia.

GRADE THREE: DANCE THE TROIKA (See Lesson Plan #3)

GRADE TWO: DRAMATIZE STORY OF BABA YAGA (See Lesson Plan #1)

NARRATOR: The aliens filled their fuel collectors and made their way back to their space ship. Let us go to the group in Puerto Rico.

GRADE THREE: SING A PUERTO RICAN SONG LIKE COQUI (The Little Frog) (Contact Kay Hill at Bilingual/Foreign Language Department)

GRADE ONE: DRAMATIZE A JUAN BOBO STORY (See Lesson Plan #1)

NARRATOR: The aliens filled their fuel collectors and made their way back to their space ship. Let us return now to the Alien's ship.

AZTECALA: We've done it! We have collected feelings from the people on Earth and have enough fuel for another billion megacenturies!

## SAMPLE MASTER SCHEDULE

---

This schedule has been created for an elementary school which has a music, art and physical education teacher willing to work on this project. The production will serve as a culminating event for the full teaching unit, and also as a culminating event for the end of the school year. Obviously the unit can be used at the time of year best suited to the participants, although it is planned that this unit will be implemented between September 1, 1990 and June 10, 1991. In a situation where the coordinator does not feel able to do the drama, it is hoped that the teachers will be prepared to do as much of it as possible, and if necessary, an “expert” can be brought in as a consultant.

*SEPTEMBER* : The Coordinator presents the project to the entire staff at a staff meeting. Special effort must be made to involve ancillary staff (Art, Music, Physical Education), as they may not come to staff meetings. This meeting is held to identify teachers, begin the process of collecting resources and to gain early commitment. If the entire staff is involved, meetings should always be held at a regular staff meeting to involve the Principal or school facilitator. The “tentative” unit dates are given: April 1-May 31. The “tentative” performance dates are given: June 3- whole group rehearsal, June 4-Dress Rehearsal, June 5-1:00 p.m. afternoon performance and a 6:30 p.m. evening performance. Effort should be made for staff to check all other schedules to determine if these dates conflict with any other school or classroom functions. Dates will be confirmed at the October staff meeting.

*OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, JANUARY, FEBRUARY* : Updates given at regular staff meetings. At the October meeting the dates for the Unit and Performances are confirmed. Resources for the study of the three cultures are continuously being identified. (See Bibliography) Methods for involving parents in the project are discussed. (Individual letters home with students, P.T.O., the School Newsletter, etc.) Coordinator talks with individual teachers to get ideas and hear concerns. Teachers understand that they will be responsible for parts of the production—not the entire thing.

Each room will work on their part(s) and only during the whole group rehearsal will everyone come together. This process allows the least amount of “disruption” to normal classroom routine, and allows the maximum number of students to benefit from performance. In January and February a separate date after school is set aside for all interested teachers to work on the script for the play. Room must be left for students to have input. Their ideas in the play will give them ownership! The sample script should serve as a guide—not as the final product!

*MARCH 5* : Update at staff meeting. Have all resources been identified? Have artists been contacted? If payment is necessary, has a funding source been identified or created? Is each participant comfortable with the direction and accomplishments to date? Although there will be ongoing updates at future staff meetings, separate meetings will now be held to address all of the needs and issues of this project.

*MARCH 27* : (45 minute meeting.) The entire schedule will be given to each participant for feedback. Discuss problems, resources, parent input, programs, video-taping, the sale of goods at the performance (possibly foods from the studied cultures), special invitations. An outline of the script is presented.

*EIGHT WEEKS OF LESSONS: (APRIL 1-MAY 31)* : During the first week, introduce project to all students. Explain that each class will study a specific culture for eight weeks, and the study will culminate in a performance. The following teachers (listed alphabetically) will assume the roles listed:

*ART TEACHER* : Assist with costume ideas, lead costume making workshops for teachers and/or students, assist with prop and scenery ideas, lead groups of students and/or teachers in the creation of props and scenery. (The idea of a teacher workshop would be for teachers to learn how to lead the activity with their students.) Mask making, interior of space ship, three environmental murals: Puerto Rico, Russia, Ghana. Create Adinkra cloth, common in Ghana. Make stamps of common symbols found in Ghana. (Chart available at Yale's Dept. of African Studies.) Possibly lead students who are playing the aliens in the creation of "new" instruments for their culture.

*CLASSROOM TEACHER* : Find and create resources, teach content (see chart), teach 1-10 in the language of the culture (make an audio tape for students to listen to on their own), show audiovisuals, rehearse scene(s) to be performed, involve parents.

*COORDINATOR* : Update script as it is changed; make copies of scripts for teachers; communicate with teachers, parents and principal; bring in visiting artists and find as many resources as possible; support teachers to make the project as positive as possible. (Remind teachers that the project should not be a "pull out" project, i.e. individual students will not be taken from classrooms for rehearsal. It is designed as a puzzle, all the students in each classroom being a self-contained puzzle piece which fits neatly into the whole picture.)

*DRAMA TEACHER* : Do at least eight Drama sessions with each class: Lead Games to assist students with basic drama skills (See Sample Lesson 1); Two sessions each to tell stories to students from each culture using Creative Drama to lead them towards the creation of a play (See Sample Lesson 2); one or two sessions on leading dance/movement instruction with each class (See Sample Lesson 3); lead fourth grade towards the creation of an alien culture (See Sample Lesson 5); one Drama session for each 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade on the creation of a new culture (See Sample Lesson 5); two sessions to develop a family scene and a market scene from each culture (See Sample Lesson 5); one session to go over the scene which will be presented in the final production. Extra sessions at discretion of teachers.

*MUSIC TEACHER* : Teach each class at least one song from the culture the students are studying. Expose students to music of each culture. (Music from Ghana available at Yale African Studies Center; Music from Puerto Rico available from the Bilingual/Foreign Language Department; Prokofieff's *Peter and the Wolf* can be used as one example of music composed in Russia.) Create a new piece of music to play with the fourth grade alien culture. (They will have to make their own "new" instruments—possibly done by the Art or classroom teacher.)

*PARENTS* : Advertise, assist with costumes, help create large pieces of scenery, two or three parents needed to assist classroom teachers with students in their classrooms the evening of the performance, video tape the production.

*PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER* : (Go over three dances that have been taught to students in six classes.) If the P.E. teacher has a dance background, s/he can take the dance teaching responsibilities. Assist fourth grade with the creation of their own dance. Possibly teach games more common in other countries: soccer, cricket, etc.

*PRINCIPAL* : Notify parents of performances, arrange for schedule changes necessary in lunch, have chairs set up, announce the program at both performances.

*VISITING ARTIST* : Demonstrate customs of one or more of the cultures studied.

## REHEARSAL/PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE:

---

*JUNE 3* : Rehearse for the first time from 9:00-11:00 a.m. the whole performance piece. This is the only time all the classes get to see the whole play. Video tape.

*JUNE 4* : Dress Rehearsal 1:00-2:00 p.m. (The Production should be kept to a one hour maximum.)Video tape.

*JUNE 5* : Two Performances: 1:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Students use their classrooms as dressing rooms and return there when their performance is over. Video tape.

## ACTUAL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

---

This project was written with the idea that it would be implemented at a newly opened magnet school in New Haven called the Clinton Avenue Language Academy. The school focuses on multicultural activities and teaches Spanish to all students in the program. Implementation at that school was not possible, however.

This unit was proposed to the 17 teachers at Davis Elementary School in February, 1991. Teachers liked the idea, and are presently reviewing the unit for use between April and June. Teachers have the option of adding a culture that they are presently studying. Mexico and Israel have already been added to the unit. The Physical Education teacher, Art Teacher and Music Teacher will be involved. Since the project started much later than anticipated, each classroom teacher will determine the “depth of study” based on his or her resources and time. Two important goals will still be achieved: to expose students to different cultures and to promote positive school community relations.

For more information on the outcome of this unit and further enhancements, changes and implementations, OR if you have implemented the unit and would like to share your changes and feedback, you can contact me: Bill Derry, Comprehensive Arts Program, Gateway Center, 54 Meadow Street, New Haven, CT 06519.

A special thanks to Professor Tom Whitaker, who lead our Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute seminar, entitled “Contemporary American Drama: Scripts and Performance.” He provided rich experiences in improvisation and helped us analyze characters and scenes from several plays. He was instrumental in shaping the final form of this unit.

## SAMPLE LESSON PLAN #1

---

### **DRAMA MODE:**

***GAME (By virtue of the fact that the teacher sets the rules, and there are specific boundaries.)***

### **PURPOSE:**

To know the words of at least six feelings.

To experience the relationship between feelings and body movements.

To experience the relationship between feelings and use of words.

To read body language.

To introduce feelings, since they are an integral part of the final production. The aliens' fuel is "feelings".

### **ACTIVITIES:**

Students pretend to wear masks. The teacher asks them to put on a mask which shows NO feeling. (The robot mask.) The teacher explains that as humans this is impossible, but with drama we can "make believe" or act "as if" it is real.

Have students hold their hands down on their desks. It is important that feelings be isolated on the face for the first part of this activity. It is difficult not to let feelings into all of our body.

With no talking put on a HAPPY, SAD, ANGRY, and FRIGHTENED mask. After these four masks, ask students for feelings that have not been done. Help them if they do not respond. Other feelings might be: GREED, SURPRISE, PRIDE, JEALOUSY, etc. Only do two or three more.

Next, talk to students about the use of the voice to express feelings. The teacher reads a selection from a reading text with no feeling, then with anger, and sadness, etc. Students will quickly understand that feeling changes the meaning of words.

The teacher now repeats the first exercise, but says "hello" to the students with the feeling expressed by the mask. Students echo the word "hello", mimicking the teacher's style.

The students now stand in a space near their desks. The teacher explains that they will now "isolate" feeling in another part of their bodies. This time instead of the face, they will use their hands. When the teacher says a feeling, the class has a count of three to make their hands show the feeling. Each student must take the feeling off their face. The teacher points out different qualities of the hands which express the feeling. i.e., anger: tight, angular; sadness: light, rounded, etc.

The next activity involves the students making a statue with their bodies of the feeling. Each student should try to show the feeling all over their bodies.

The final step is for students to think of a reason for their feeling. The teacher goes around and asks different students, "Why do you feel so . . .", and the student responds with a reason. Each student's movements and quality of voice should be appropriate to the named feeling.

In order to make this sequence of events more obviously game like, the activity concludes with a "real" game, "What's My Feeling?" Three or four students create a feeling statue in front of the entire group. They must come to life and express their feelings for at least 30 seconds, using no sounds. Students can guess what the

feeling is. The second stage of the game would be to guess the situation. The students in front of the class would complete the game by acting out the situation (with words) for the rest of the group to see how close the guess was to the actual situation.

## **SAMPLE LESSON PLAN #2**

---

### **DRAMA MODES:**

**STORYTELLING/CREATIVE DRAMA/PLAYMAKING** (*Students use a variety of drama techniques to play out the story told by the teacher. Through repetition the playing out becomes a play and the story can move towards production.*)

**PURPOSE:** *To know the story **Why Spiders Live in Dark Corners**, an Ananse story from Ghana.*

To participate in a group telling of a story.

**ACTIVITIES:** *The teacher tells the story, **Why Spiders Live in Dark Corners**.* <sup>11</sup>

Select characters for acting the story out: Ananse, Mrs. Spider, Two Magicians, Sticky Scarecrow, and Spider Children (all the children left are the spider children). The teacher acts as narrator, and fills in where the students need help. This depends on the skill of the students and the quality of the original story telling. The teacher plays a spider child! Establish spider movement by demonstrating a possible spider movement to the class.

The spider children are all squished together. The teacher leads the group in complaining about the small rooms. Mother says she will go and ask father if they can move into a new house. Mother tries to wake Ananse three times, "Ananse . . . Ananse . . . ANANSE!!!" Ananse wakes and says, "What dear?" She asks her question and he replies: "Oh, my back hurts! Oh, my head hurts! Oh, my stomach hurts! You will have to do it yourself!"

The teacher leads in role as a spider child; moving furniture together, building walls and creating a new house. Mother may need a reminder that the garden has to be built. After Ananse gives his pat response, the children plant all kinds of vegetables: peanuts, rice, cassava, yams, beans, etc. They mime watering it with water cans and the narrator (teacher shifts roles from spider child to story mover) says: "The garden grew and grew and grew. Finally the family made a giant feast."

Family mimes preparing feast. Ananse is asked to join. He leaps in the air and runs to the table. The children and Mrs. Spider all go to sleep before he finishes. He thinks to himself, "Oh, if only I could eat and sleep forever. I would be the happiest spider alive." Ananse gets the idea to go to the magicians, and the magicians tell him what to do when he gets home. They give him a magic root which when eaten makes one appear dead. Ananse is to tell his family he is so sick he is going to die. The family should dig a hole for him in the middle of the garden and put his fork, knife, spoon, plate, cooking pot and bed in it. Ananse should take a bite from the root and "die." After the funeral, dirt should not be placed in the hole, but banana leaves should be placed on top so Ananse will have a little house in his afterlife!

Children and Mrs. Spider cry when they hear Ananse is going to die. (This can get too silly. Stop it before it goes too far. Ask students to make it as real as possible.) Make a circle and pretend to dig a hole. Mother asks

children to bring in the fork, knife, plate, spoon, cooking pot and bed. (Teacher guides Ananse to lie down after eating the magic root.) Teacher, as the oldest spider child, chooses four or five students to help carry Ananse into the hole. (Good trust activity which can be done seriously by First Graders!) Teacher leads students in reminiscing about father: i.e., “He was lazy but he told us great stories”, “He could play the drums better than anyone else in the village”, “I remember when he took us all to the capital of Accra and we had a great time.” etc. (The first playing should not focus on factual information—go for feeling, facts can be added later.)

After the funeral—Teacher as narrator: “That night Ananse opened one eye, then another, then a big smile came over his face. It worked. He slowly climbed out into his garden and grabbed as many vegetables as he could carry, took them into his hole, cooked them, and ate them all up. Then he went to sleep. He did this for seven nights and days, until Mrs. Ananse walked out into the garden. Watch!” Mrs. Spider is aghast at the loss of her vegetables. She builds a scarecrow and covers it with goo from a sticky goo tree. Ananse wakes and after asking who is in his garden, hits (pretends to hit) the scarecrow. (Teacher must demonstrate a pretend hit!) The family, neighbors and Mrs. Ananse force him out of the village into a dark corner.

Each time through the teacher takes less and less of a role until the students can act it out by themselves.

## **SAMPLE LESSON PLAN #3**

---

### **DRAMA MODE:**

#### *DANCE/MOVEMENT*

#### **PURPOSE: To know a Russian dance.**

To experience the relationship between feelings and body movements.

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

There are many ways to teach students a dance. A “professional” can be called in to teach the dance. The teacher can learn with the students and practice with the students when the Dance teacher is not there. The Music teacher or Physical Education teacher can teach the dance. There are many books which describe dance steps. The teacher can practice on her own and teach the students herself.

The following dance, a Russian Troika, was dictated over the telephone to me by Ada Wilson, a member of an International Dance group. (She lead an excellent Folk Dance Workshop for New Haven Music and Arts Teachers.) She will go over the dance in person with me before I teach it to my students in the next school year.

I am not concerned if my students do not dance the dance like the Russians. I am concerned that they participate and dance it to the best of their abilities and get a feel for the sound and movement of the people of Russia. A cassette tape of a Russian Troika, courtesy once again of Ada Wilson, will be available at the Institute Office on Wall Street.

There should be at least 18 people. They need to be in groups of three. (If the group is not evenly divided by three, improvise with a group of two or four.) Arrange groups of three, holding hands, making a circle. (Three

in front of three, in front of three, etc.)

- 1) Eight big leaping steps forward.
- 2) Eight big leaping steps backward.
- 3) Person in center lifts left hand, making an arch with his/her partner on the left.
- 4) Person on the right goes through the arch, in eight steps.
- 5) Person in the center turns under arch in place—in eight steps, then all hold hands.
- 6) Center person lifts right hand, making an arch with his/her partner on the right.
- 7) Person on the left goes through the arch, in eight steps.
- 8) Person in the center turns under arch in place—in eight steps, then all hold hands.
- 9) Grapevine 16 steps clockwise (right foot crosses in front of left, left foot back left, right foot crosses in back of left.)
- 10) Grapevine 16 steps counter clockwise (left foot crosses in back of right, right foot back right, left foot crosses in back of right.)
- 11) REPEAT from the beginning. This time on the 8 big steps forward, the middle person takes bigger steps and walks into the middle space of the three people in front of him or her. This changes the three people all the time.

## **SAMPLE LESSON PLAN #4**

---

### **DRAMA MODE:**

#### *ROLE PLAYING*

**PURPOSE:** *To experience some of the problems resulting from changes which take place in a culture.*

**ACTIVITIES:** *The students have studied Ghana for at least six weeks before this activity takes place. They have heard one Ananse story, learned one dance and can count from 1-10 in the Twi language. They are aware of the great culture of the Ashanti people and the extent of their*

***influence in Africa at one time. They are aware of the fact that there are tribal chiefs presently in Ghana who have lost much of their power to the new form of government. The students have created some drawings and crafts typical of Ghana. They are told that the person visiting the class is playing the role of a chief, but they are asked to believe it for the sake of exploring some new ideas. (Students will accept this not only because it is fun, but because they do it all the time with television.)***

A visiting artist from Ghana is hired to dress as and play the part of a modern chief from a village in Ghana. The chief is visiting the class to plead for help. "My culture is fading. There are too many changes. What can I do?" (This could be video taped.)

The students and teacher(s) will become engaged in a conversation. The teacher can best serve the situation by helping to direct questions or making statements which cause students to think in a new direction. For example the classroom teacher might play devil's advocate and say, "You should accept facts. Times have changed. You no longer can make the laws." The teacher could also say, "Is there not a place where you can go with your people and not be bothered by the new ways?"

After approximately thirty minutes the person in role should leave, change into "western" clothes and come back in as himself to discuss what happened. It is this period of reflection which will be most important. (If the situation was video taped, the video tape can be used to review what happened, and will increase the impact of the event.)

(Another way to do this activity is to have the class become members of an Ashanti village in Ghana. A person in role enters as the government Minister of Transportation to discuss the movement of the village because of the new "super-highway" coming through.)

## **SAMPLE LESSON PLAN #5**

---

### **DRAMA MODE:**

*IMPROVISATION (Dorothy Heathcote's "Mantle of the Expert")*

### **PURPOSE:**

To experience the relationships between geographical location, natural resources and the development of a culture.

### **ACTIVITIES:**

The teacher talks to students about the word culture. A discussion follows.

The teacher asks students if they would be willing to create a new culture of their own. (The teacher needs to get their commitment, so if they should say no, present it in a new way, or present it to a different group.) Using markers and large pieces of paper, the teacher writes down important responses from students. (Where is the culture? Describe climate and terrain; list available natural resources.) It is important that their input is used if they are to feel any real ownership of the work.

The teacher asks what must be done first to establish the culture. (Using the categories of culture provided in

the previous chart, teachers can lead students from their comments to the particular area of culture. For example, if a student says we need rap music, the teacher can direct the student's attention towards the arts of the culture. Another method of classifying culture, which I think could work well with students in grades 5 and up:

1) symbolism, 2) value, 3) authority, 4) order, 5) ceremony, 6) love, 7) honor, 8) humor, 9) beauty, and 10) spirit.<sup>12</sup> Students decide to name the culture (Nimvat, for example). (If names are suggested which cause silliness, ask that a new name be created. If a name seems silly only to the teacher, then the name can be kept.)

The teacher can lead the drama in two ways: from outside and from within role (as described in "SAMPLE LESSON #1"). There is an advantage to each method. From outside the teacher plays himself or herself, holding on to the traditional authority assumed by the role s/he is really playing. If the teacher uses a role within the drama, as s/he did as the spider child in the Ananse story, s/he becomes more equal to the students and can "guide" the drama as a participant. In this role the teacher actually gets an opportunity to "play" with the students. This is much more difficult for most teachers as it means giving up authority. (It is actually a safe way to experience this kind of drama, as the teacher role is always available.)

In the first lesson each participant takes a specialized role in the community: map maker(s), house builder(s), clothes maker(s), law maker(s), doctor(s), teacher(s), inventor(s), explorer(s), leader(s), constitution writer(s), flag maker(s), food grower(s), etc. It is best to make small groups of workers, unless a student works better alone or in a pair.

After all of these people meet with the leader the first drama ends. Before the second drama each student draws a picture or creates an artifact which will be used in the second drama. The map-maker makes a map of the first town, the clothes maker draws a picture of the clothing worn by boys and girls, the flag maker designs a flag. Each drama from this point on will need to have TENSION to give dramatic form. Possible points of tension include: water supply is dwindling, possible attack by another culture, disease, the celebration of the first holiday, a group of people within the culture decide to revolt, or the leader becomes very sick.

## Notes

---

1. Mortimer J. Adler, *The Paideia Proposal—An Educational Manifesto* , 55.
2. LynNell Hancock, "Whose America Is This, Anyway?," 37-39.
3. Marilee C. Rist, "Ethnocentric Education", 26-29.
4. John W. Wright, editor, *The Universal Almanac 1990*, 481.
5. E.D.Hirsch, Jr., *A First Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* , p. 121.
6. Betty Jane Wagner, *Dorothy Heathcote—Drama as a Learning Medium* , 181.
7. *Ibid.*, 15.
8. Brian Way, *Development Through Drama* , 8.
9. *Ibid.*, 6-7.
10. Alice C. Omaggio, *Teaching Language in Context* , 361.
11. Joyce Cooper Arkhurst, *The Adventures of Spider* , 21-28.
12. Omaggio, 364.

## TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

(Resources marked with an asterisk may be used by students)

### EDUCATION/CULTURE/MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Adler, Mortimer J. *The Paideia Proposal—An Educational Manifesto* . New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1982. A short, intriguing book devoted to a proposal for reforming America's educational system.

Cottrol, Robert J. "America the Multicultural" in *American Educator* 14, No. 4 (Winter, 1990): 18-21,38. Focuses on why multicultural education is so important in America.

Damen, Louise. *Culture Learning: The Fifth Dimension in the Language Classroom*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1987. Good unit on intercultural miscommunication—which would be "fun" to dramatize. Rich resource. Chapter 15 devoted to cross-cultural considerations in the classroom. At the end of each chapter is an excellent annotated bibliography, and they are listed again in a 26 page bibliography at the end of the book.

Hancock, LynNell. "Whose America Is This, Anyway?," in *The Village Voice* 33, No. 17 (April, 1990): 37-39. Interesting article on the issue of integrating multicultural education into the curriculum. Centers on New York City debate.

Hirsch, E.D. *A First Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* . Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1989. Dr. Hirsch defines the "core knowledge" needed by all children to understand our culture.

Newhill, Esko E. and Paglia, Umberto La. *Exploring World Cultures* . Lexington, MA: Ginn and Company, 1986. This gem comes with an incredibly useful, readable teacher's edition. It is available at the Center for International and Asian Studies listed under "Community Resources" in this bibliography. Although the book is written for 6th grade and above, materials can be adapted for the lower elementary. The HANDOUTS section of the teacher guide contains especially useful information on cultural concepts: rules, beliefs, values, how people listen and speak, exploring stereotypes, and categories of behavior found in all known human groups. Lists audio visual resources.

Omaggio, Alice C. *Teaching Language in Context* . Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, Inc., 1986. Called "The Bible" for Teachers of Foreign Languages. This book has clear objectives for teaching cultural awareness and includes specific activities. Especially useful is chapter 9, "Teaching for Cultural Understanding".

Rist, Marilee C. "Ethnocentric Education", in *The American School Board* 178, No.1 (January, 1991): 26-29. Discusses the pros and cons of multicultural education and details pitfalls and advantages of a curriculum designed around a single ethnic group.

### DRAMA/THEATER BOOKS

Kase-Polisini, editor. *Drama as a Meaning Maker* . Lanham,MD: University Press of America, 1989. 43 distinguished Drama educators respond to one of three professionals outside the field of Drama: a neuropsychologist, novelist and professor of psychology. Explores Drama as context.

Kelly, Elizabeth. *Dramatics in the Classroom: Making Lessons Come Alive* . Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1976. A short, concise booklet which presents some concrete techniques for using Drama in Education to teach the curriculum.

\*Korty, Carol. *Plays From African Folktales, With Ideas for Acting, Dance, Costumes and Music* . New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,

1975. I have successfully used a play from this book with a group of 2nd-5th graders. Simple scripts with good ideas for costuming and staging. Includes an Ananse tale from Ghana, Ananse's Trick Does Double Work.

McCaslin, Nellie. *Creative Drama in the Primary Grades: A Handbook for Teachers* . New York: Longman, Inc., 1987. Excellent text for understanding the values of Creative Drama and learning a variety of Drama techniques. This book would be a valuable resource for a teacher unfamiliar with Creative Drama.

McCaslin, Nellie, ed. *Children and Drama* . New York: Longman, Inc., 1981. Twenty-one leaders in the field of Drama in Education have written essays on the subject. Particularly interesting are D. Heathcote's on page 78, E. Kelly's on page 91, G. Bolton's on page 178, and J. Hodgson's on page 238.

Siks, Geraldine Brain. *Drama with Children* . New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1983. A Drama text which provides lesson plans designed to meet specific educational objectives. Siks uses Piaget's theories of personality development in children to provide a rationale for using various Drama techniques with children of different ages.

Wagner, Betty Jane. *Dorothy Heathcote: Drama As a Learning Medium* . Washington D.C.: National Education Association, 1976. Wagner describes Heathcote's techniques of distilling theater elements for the purpose of creating dynamic, dramatic situations in which learning, through experience, can take place.

Way, Brian. *Development Through Drama* . New York: Humanities Press, 1963. A useful text providing rationales and specific activities for using Drama to assist in the creation of a "whole human being."

## **GHANA, AFRICA**

\*Arkhurst, Joyce Cooper. *The Adventures of Spider* . New York: Scholastic Magazine, Inc., 1964. Contains several Ananse stories, including the story used in Lesson Plan #1 in this unit.

Asihene, E.V. *Apoo Festival* . Tema, Ghana: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1980. Explains the importance of all festivals and the Apoo festival in particular. It represents the nuisances the community has had to put up with during the preceding year. Every person is given the right to criticize anybody they want. Details on the celebration of this festival are provided. Words and translations to songs are also provided.

\*DeLuca, Angelina. *African Arts Curriculum Guide* . West Hartford Public Schools, 1984. Many Visual Art activities with good instructions. Available at the Council on African Studies listed under "Community Resources" in this bibliography.

\*Mensah, Isaac Dankyi. *Kano Had His Lesson* . Accra-North, Ghana: Quick Service Books & Stationery Supply, 1986. Great story to read to students with black and white drawings illustrating life in a Ghanaian village. Available at the Yale Council on African Studies.

\*Mensah, Isaac Dankyi. *The Two Hunter Friends* . Accra-North, Ghana: Quick Service Books & Stationery Supply, 1986. A story of two hunters with their two dogs on a hunting expedition. One hunter has a brush with death. The story ends on a humorous note. Names several indigenous animals and provides insight into some customs. Available at the Yale Council on African Studies.

\*Okai, Atukwei. *The Anthill in the Sea (Verses and Chants for Children)* . Accra, Ghana: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1988. Collection of 27 verses and chants written by a Ghanaian with an M.A. from the Gorky Literary Institute in Moscow. (Two cultures being studied are represented here!) Beautiful illustrations.

Sale, Kirk J. *The Land and People of Ghana* . New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1972. Good book for the classroom teacher to use for basic information on Ghana.

Sarpong, Rt. Rev. Dr. Peter. *Ghana in Retrospect* . Accra, Ghana: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1974. Gives considerable information on customs and rites of passage which can be adapted for the lower elementary. Covers religion, values, art and crafts, music, myths, etiquette and more.

## *PUERTO RICO*

\*Elisofon, Eliot. *A Week in Leonora's World: Puerto Rico* . New York: Crowell-Collier Press, 1971. A picture book of Puerto Rico through the eyes of a young girl.

\*Masters, Robert V. *Puerto Rico in Pictures* . New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1979. Black and white pictures chronicle some of Puerto Rico's history and significant sites. Text for teachers; pictures can be used with students.

Morris, Marshall. *Saying & Meaning in Puerto Rico* . New York: Pergamon Press, 1981. Looks at the indirectness of language (Spanish and English) in Puerto Rico and the use of body language to convey meaning. Interesting and complex.

McKown, Robin. *The Image of Puerto Rico* . New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1973. Traces the history of Puerto Rico from the landing of Columbus to its future as a possible fifty-first state or independent nation.

Tovar, Federico Ribes. *100 Outstanding Puerto Ricans* . New York: Educational Publishers, Inc., 1976. Provides a brief synopsis of the lives of famous Puerto Ricans in a variety of fields.

\*Williams, Byron. *Puerto Rico. Commonwealth, State, or Nation?* New York: Parents' Magazine Press, 1972. Provides good background information for the teacher. Photographs good for students.

\*Winslow, Zachery. *Puerto Rico* . Edgemont, Pa.: Chelsea House

Publishers, 1986. Surveys the history, topography, people, and culture of Puerto Rico, with an emphasis on the current economy, industry, and place in the political world. Text for teachers; pictures for students.

## *RUSSIA, SOVIET UNION*

\*Cohen, David and Smolan, Rick. *A Day In the Life Of the Soviet Union* . New York: Collins Publishers, Inc., 1987. Incredible photographs of people and places throughout the U.S.S.R.

\*Haskins, Jim. *Count Your Way through Russia* . Minneapolis, Minn.: Carolrhoda Books, Inc., 1987. Great book with Russian customs and facts appropriate for each number 1-10.

\*Jackson, W.A. Douglas. *Soviet Union* . Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Gideler Co., 1980. A good overview of life in the Soviet Union, with many photographs and illustrations.

\*Masey, Mary Lou. *The Picture Story of the Soviet Union* . New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1971. A good book for teachers to use with children. Looks at life throughout the USSR with plenty of maps and illustrations.

\*Morton, Miriam, ed. *A Harvest of Russian Children's Literature* . Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968. Older students can read some of this. This is the book to use for short poems, stories, verse, fables and works by famous Russian authors. A Baba-Yaga story is on page 149!

Parker, W.H. The Russians. *How They Live and Work* . New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973. A good description of Russian life.

Easy to read. 16 black and white photographs.

\*Vandivert, Rita and William. *Young Russia, Children of the USSR at Work and at Play*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1960. Although relatively old, the pictures do not look very different from many scenes I saw when in Russia in 1989.

### *COMMUNITY RESOURCES/AUDIOVISUAL AIDS*

(The resources listed are specific for New Haven, CT. Hopefully similar local resources are available in your community.)

*Casa Cultural Julia de Burgos, Yale University*

Center for Puerto Rican Study

301 Crown St. New Haven, CT. 06520

432-0856

Dean Carlos Torre

Primarily historical and political books in Spanish. Contact for people resources.

Council on African Studies, Yale University

89 Trumbull Street New Haven, CT. 06520

432-3438

Maxwell Amoh, Director (Also an artist from Ghana who leads a performing group named Agoro)

Many books, audiovisual bibliography, music, contacts and more!

Foreign Language Department-New Haven Public Schools

21 Wooster Place New Haven, CT. 06520

787-8685

Mary Lowery, Supervisor of Foreign Languages

Lisette Bernier-McGowan, Supervisor of Bilingual Education

Kay Hill, Curriculum/Staff Developer for the Bilingual Program

Many records, cassettes and books—especially on Puerto Rico. Plenty of teacher resources as well. Kay Hill's record, distributed by Folkways Records, 1979, contains counting-out rhymes in Spanish and English: *Who Goes First? ¿Quién va primero?*

International Folk Dance Group

18 Water Street Guilford, CT. 06437

453-3263

Ada Wilson, Contact and Dancer

Ada taught a dance workshop for New Haven Music and Arts teachers. She is very helpful and knowledgeable about folk dances around the world.

New Haven Public Schools-Audio Visual Center

Wexler School-787-8687

Dr. Astarita, Director

There is a catalogue of available materials.

Russian and East European Studies, Yale University

85 Trumbull Street New Haven, CT. 06520

432-5963

Brian Carter, Director of Russian Studies

A veritable treasure trove of materials, including books, filmstrips with cassettes and people contacts.

---

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>