



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1993 Volume II: Folktales

Folktales: Oral Traditions as a Basis for Instruction in our Schools

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As a middle school teacher, I see students who come into reading lab hoping that it will be a lot like a library at a university. Everyone has to be quiet and all that they are required to do is read. This is not the case in my class. I view reading as a thinking, speaking, writing and reading workshop where students think and speak about the things they observe, write and read. It is from this angle that I have approached this unit.

For me, the unit will primarily serve as an introduction to the new school year. I chose the topic, "Folktales: Oral Traditions as a Basis for Instruction on Our Schools" because I want the unit to serve as an invitation for reluctant readers and speakers to join the lesson freely while also setting the pace for the class during the school year. The unit is designed to help students feel comfortable reading, discussing and writing about selections which they have read.

The oral tradition or art of storytelling is one that is almost lost in our society. Every culture which has melted into the great American melting pot has oral traditions which are uniquely their own. These oral traditions are what are known as folklore or folktales. Today, due in part each to commercialization, immigration, and economy, folktales and fairy tales are virtually indistinguishable. Tales are as varied as the people who tell them. Nothing better demonstrates this idea than the invitation by Spencer Shaw, "Please tell us a story from the book that is inside you." These words have been the bridge over which listeners and tellers have crossed from reality into the realms of imagination and fantasy. (Faulkner, p. ix)

The word folklore or folktales is like an umbrella. Due in part to modernization and the loss of the art of storytelling, the words are used interchangeably although originally, folktales were covered under the umbrella of folklore. Folklore covers several types of narrative prose found through out the oral traditions of the world. Folklore includes myths, legends, fairy tales, tall tales, fables and songs from around the world. Folktales are highly creative and often interweave truth with imagination Folklore may pass in and out of written literature and may contain morals or lessons. The stories invariably offer a unique insight into the people who invented them.(Muschla, p. 113)

Keeping my classroom population in mind, and also keeping in mind that classification by type and motif lead to clear organization, classification seemed a good place to start organizing my unit. For my own classroom purposes, I divided my unit into four thematic areas which I call Tricksters Getting Tricked, Dreams Come True, Clever Animal Helpers, and Tales of Enchantment. The titles for each mini unit come out of the stories chosen for each unit.

The theme of the first mini unit, Tricksters Getting Tricked is what Arne/ Thompson called tale type 500 -The name of the helper. I am calling the helper the trickster here. These tricksters are always marked characters who bear physical and even magical differences which separate them from humans. There is usually some deformity of size or shape. This person's greed usually causes him to out-trick himself thus causing him to have to walk away empty handed.

These are moral tales in that they show the perils of boasting, though this aspect is not stressed. They are fairy tales because the heroine receives supernatural help in the form of a dwarf or a witch. They are properly constructed dramatic tales in that to obtain such assistance, the heroines have to make the most of terrible pledges, the life of their first-born child. They are primitive tales in that they hinge on the belief of the interdependence of name and identity: the supernatural power is only broken if the name can be discovered. Lastly, they are also tales possessing genuine folk appeal in that a supernatural creature is outwitted by human cleverness when they are overheard singing.(Opie, p253)

In "Rumpelstiltskin", a boastful miller brags about the skills of his shrewd and clever daughter. He tells the King that his daughter can spin straw into gold. The greedy King takes the miller at his word and invites the daughter to the castle to spin. The girl protests strongly and is ordered to spin the straw to gold by morning on penalty of her life. She is locked in the room where she starts to lament, when in hobbles a "droll-looking little man." He puts her mind at ease by telling her that he will spin the straw into gold for her and requires her necklace as payment. The next morning, the King is truly pleased and tells her that if she can do it again, he will make her his queen. Sure enough the dwarf visits again and this time asks for her first-born when she is queen in payment for his services. The miller's daughter shrugs in agreement thinking that the entire idea of her becoming queen is really remote. Once the agreement is made, her fate is seemingly sealed. One year later, after their marriage, the maiden queen, the King and their kingdom are enjoying the birth, the dwarf shows up again demanding his payment: the child for the room full of straw being spun into gold. The kingdom is horrified and the Queen begs for a means of getting out of the agreement. The dwarf gives her the opportunity to get out. by telling her that if she can guess his name in three tries, she can keep her son. Word goes out to all of the kingdom and each of her first two attempts fail. Meanwhile a messenger comes to the castle on the morning of the third guess. He had overheard a little man singing to himself out in the woods about how he had tricked the Queen. He tells the Queen the dwarf's name and because of this she is allowed to keep her child.

In the Caribbean equivalent "Granny Sogando" a farmer, whose nick-name is 'Bragadocious' because he likes to brag about his daughter's abilities as a weaver, makes a bargain with the governor when he is overheard saying "My daughter weaves straw so well that even the silk worms in China get mad at her." The "greedy, money-grubbing governor" overhears this conversation and orders that the girl be sent to the Government House at sunset. The girl arrives as ordered and is immediately locked up in a room with a few bundles of palm straw and more orders to weave the thick blades into silk. The girl protests and is ignored. She sits in the room looking at her task in despair and starts to moan. She receives help from an obeah woman (the Caribbean's equivalent of a witch doctor) on her first night in the room. The only payment that is asked, is the "beautiful scarf which she is using to tie her thick hair." The job gets done and the governor asks the girl to come back again the same evening to do a larger version of the same job. If she can accomplish this task, then she will earn the position as the governor's wife. The girl agrees to the proposition, feeling that even if she did perform the task, he probably would not keep his word. The girl is once again locked in the room and the obeah woman returns. This time the payment is her first-born child when she is the governor's wife. With her feelings about the governor's integrity, she agrees. The straw is once again woven into fine silk and the girl becomes the governor's wife. One year later, almost to the day of the bargain, the entire island is

celebrating the birth of the governor's child when the obeah woman comes to collect her payment for weaving the straw into silk. The governor and his wife plead with the woman to allow them some means of keeping their child. They offer everything to no avail until the woman gives them three days to guess her name. The long and short of the story is that the girl is told the name by her friend the crab and she is able to get out of the bargain. The old woman screams in anger and leaves vowing to get even with the one who told the name, the crab. This leads to another tale entitled, "How the Crab Got the Crack in its Back.

Tricksters can be found in every folklore tradition of the world. The trickster as hero or as god plays an important role. Whether he is animal or human, he plays his tricks out to the end. Tricksters represent the chaos in the ordered world. Being the advocate of uncertainty, they recognize neither good nor evil and firmly reemphasize our own morality. (Yolen, p. 127) As in the case of 'the name of the helper' type tales, win or lose, these stories always make us smile at the ingenuity of the hero or heroine or they make us shake our heads fondly at the gutsiness of the trickster who really out wits us all. (Yolen, p. 128)

The second thematic mini unit, 'Dreams Come True,' are the stories from the "Cinderella" cycle. In these tales, a truly worthy heroine emerges from the ashes of despair. Generally she is the youngest sibling who is treated like an outcast in her own home because she is beautiful, talented, sincere, and hardworking. Though she is poorly treated, she endures it all cheerfully. A common motif running through these tales is intervention, whether by fairy, magical helper, animal helper, or human who returns a kind favor and without whom our protagonist would be left to endure life's hardships as usual. Upon receiving the help, the heroine in all of her 'burned' regalia is recognized and walks away with her coveted prize, marriage to the prince or warrior. Her sisters are punished either by death, being made subservient or being changed into another form.

Some accounts of the Cinderella tales are quiet gruesome, in nature. Her sisters cut off parts of their feet to fit the slipper in the German variant of the tale recorded by the Brothers Grimm, and upon Cinderella's marriage to the prince, the two stepsisters' eyes were plucked out by pigeons. (Opie, p. 155) For the purposes of this unit we will use Perault's 'version which was adapted by Walt Disney since it is probably the most familiar of all of the Cinderella tales, and also the most aesthetically pleasing.

In Perault's version, the story begins with a gentleman widow with a young daughter who has just married his second wife. She is not a nice person, and to add insult to injury, she has two daughters who have inherited her awful disposition. The young girl is forced into being a servant in her own home. She is forced to sit among the ashes when her work is finished, thus earning her the names Cinderilla and Cinderbreech which she is called by her two stepsisters. She is mistreated and fed scraps. Her father does not say anything for fear of receiving the wrath of the stepmother, his evil wife. The mistreatment continues until the day that the invitation to the ball at the castle arrives. After this Cinderilla receives even worse treatment. She is given all of their new gowns to iron and the arduous task of helping them dress and style their hair. Anyone else would have ruined them in some way, but not Cinderilla, She only follows them as long as her eyes could bear to, in tears. Her fairy Godmother watches all of this from a corner of the room. When she has had quite enough, she appears to Cinderilla. She turns the scraps and rags that were present into the riches worthy of a princess at a ball. The same action occurs on one more occasion and this time Cinderilla appears more beautiful than before. When she is leaving, she leaves a glass slipper behind which the Prince declares will fit only his wife. He sends out messengers to find the lady whom the shoe will fit and the search seems lost when Cinderilla is spotted dressed in ashes and rags. Her stepsisters and stepmother laugh at her, but cease their laughter when the shoe fits and she is able to pull the other shoe out of her pocket. Cinderella marries the Prince that same day and take her two stepsisters into the court and marries them off to lords.

In the Oriental account entitled “Yeh-Shin” a young girl, the youngest of three sisters who live with their widowed mother, is poorly treated and forced to sleep away from the family and do all of the household chores. On one of her trips to get water, Yeh Shin catches a fish which she does not know is magical. The fish is very small and instead of eating it, Yeh Shin takes it to a nearby lake and takes care of it until it grows to nearly two feet long. One day she is followed and seen talking to the fish. She is reported to her mother who one day puts on Yeh Shin’s coat and goes to the lake. As usual, upon recognizing the coat the fish puts its head up on the shore. The Stepmother catches it, kills, cooks and eats it then buries the bones under a bush nearby. Later when Yeh Shin comes to visit the fish, she hears the bones talk to her and she obeys what they ask. She is asked to dig up the bones and carry them home and whenever she wants something she is to pray to them and she will have her wish. One day an invitation to a ball is delivered and the stepsisters and the stepmother attend. Yeh Shin is upset and prays to the bones until she turns around and sees beautiful clothing laid out for her. The Emperor’s son is so impressed by her that he holds another ball one week later. Yeh Shin appears again and this time leaves a small red silk slipper behind. The slipper is sent from clan to clan to try to find the owner. By a quirk of luck a gentleman in a province across the sea hears about Yeh Shin and brings the slipper to her to try on. When it is found to fit, Yeh Shin marries the Emperor’s son and they live happily ever after.

Both of the previous tales use the motif of the small, elegant shoe as the test of worthiness to be the ruler’s wife. It seems that in each of these societies clothing, a pretty face and particular personal traits like small feet make the person more desirable for courtship. They seem not to have heard of the old adage that says, “beauty is only skin deep...”. The following two tales use the protagonist’s character traits as their test. When discussing each of these stories, one could make the argument that “ugly goes all the way down to the bone.” Each of the protagonists shows their worthiness by being humble and honest while their sisters are less than honorable members of their society.

The African tale, “Salt, Sauce, and Spice, Onion Leaves, Pepper and Drippings,” is about six sisters who set out on journey to find a young man worthy of their hand in marriage. Each of the sisters bears the characteristics of her name and their ages coincide with their discovery in terms of their use. Salt, Sauce and Spice are not nice girls. They act as though without them the world would not exist. They bear these names because of their characteristics in aiding the tastefulness of a pot which is cooking. Generally they are characterized by sweet savory smells. The youngest of the three younger sisters name is exactly opposite of her personality. Drippings is the youngest sister. As with all drippings in the bottom of a roasting pan, the smell is terrible, but its flavor (personality) is excellent. Naturally because of her smelly characteristic, and her kind disposition, Drippings is asked to walk far behind her older sisters. During the journey to another tribe to speak with the young man, they all pass an old woman who is taking a bath in a pond. She asks each in turn to wash her back and all refuse except Drippings. In gratitude for the favor the old woman tells Drippings the name of the young man and how to answer the question that he will ask all of them. Of course because of their impoliteness to the old lady the other sisters all fail the test. They send in Drippings to face the test because as they say, “If we have failed surely she will too so let her go in so that she can say that she has had a chance.” Much to their surprise Drippings answers the questions correctly and wins the young man’s hand in marriage. The other five sisters are made into her servants because of their mistreatment of the old lady at the pond who turns out to be the young man’s mother.

In the story, “The Indian Cinderella” the Canadian Indian version of the Cinderella cycle, a father in a village has three daughters whose mother has been dead a long time. The youngest of the three is much younger than the other two and she had such a wonderful personality that she ‘was loved and admired by all of the people in the village. The two older sisters hated her because of this and made her dress in rags, puts cinders

in her hair and burned her face and body with hot coals so that she was quite scarred and disfigured. They thought that by doing this she might appear ugly. Just outside of the village there lived a warrior whose name was Strongwind. Strongwind had been good to the god Glooskap and had been granted the power of invisibility. He lived with his sister who helped him out through the day while he went out to do his work. Because of his good fortune, many women sought his hand in marriage. Strongwind devised a test for all of these fair maidens because he disliked those who could or would not tell the truth. His sister would assist him with this test as she was the only one who could see him when he appeared invisible to others. Each evening when the sun was about to set, his sister would take a young woman who sought his hand in marriage down to the shoreline and would ask them if they had seen Strongwind. When they responded yes, as they always did, she would ask them, "with what; is he carrying his bed?" The girls who had all told lies would respond incorrectly and would be dismissed because Strongwind did not like dishonesty. One day the youngest of the sisters went to seek Strong Wind's hand in marriage. When his sister took her to the bay and asked the first question, the ash girl said that she had not seen him. Upon hearing her response Strongwind reveals himself to her. Then, because his sister knew that she was telling the truth and that Strongwind would reveal himself to her because she truthfully answered the first question, she asks the second question. The girl responds that he is bringing home his bed with a rainbow. Strongwind's sister immediately took her home and bathed her thereby removing the ashes from her hair and the scars from her skin. She dressed the younger sister in fine clothing and gave her jewels. The two other sisters had such trouble with the idea that their younger sister had become the bride of Strongwind that when he hears their grumbling lie changes them into Aspen trees firmly planted in the soil. To this day, the story goes, Aspen trees tremble at the approach of strong winds.

In all of the forms of the tales in the Cinderella cycle, the heroine is put to some test that is fairly simple, but all other women in the community have a lot of trouble passing it. The heroine in all cases possesses characteristics that are most becoming of a wife. They are kind, gentle, considerate, and have a great respect for truth and age. They are also ostracized for these characteristics and are forcefully placed in positions of service and being humble. Through it all our protagonist prevails and triumphs like a phoenix who rises -From the ashes of her old existence.

The third thematic mini unit I have called 'Clever Animal Helpers'. These have also been named the "Puss in Boots" tales, and are tale type 545B in Arne/Thompson. These stories all start off with a family so poor that when the father dies, he cannot leave his children very much in his will because he doesn't have very much to begin with. Usually what he has is left; to the older siblings and the favorite pet is left to the protagonist who is the youngest son. The animal seems useless; however because of its cunning and cleverness the young hero receives riches and high position in society because of a marriage arranged by the clever pet. Because of the cunning that this pet must have, it is usually a cat or a fox. In the tale "The Master Cat", a young boy's father dies. He leaves his eldest son his mill, the middle son his donkey and his youngest son, his cat. The youngest son does not see his good fortune and he laments loudly over this and the cat hears him. The cat raises its head and nonchalantly says, if you just give me a bag and a pair of boots you will see that you do not have life as bad as you may think that you have it. The youngest son gives the cat what he has asked for. The cat uses the bag to catch wild game which he takes to the King saying that it is a gift from his master the Marquis of Carabas. The King is indeed very pleased with the gifts that he receives and each time the cat reminds him that it is a gift from the Marquis of Carabas so that the King in a short time grows quite accustomed to hearing the name. One day while the youngest son is out taking a bath, the cat spies the King's coach. He hides his young master's clothes and proceeds to yell, "Help. Help my master the Marquis of Carabas is being drowned." The King upon hearing the name of his friend immediately stops the coach. He had been out riding with his daughter, the Princess. The cat, who had hidden his master's clothes under a rock, explained that while his master was bathing some robbers stole his clothing and tried to drown him. The

King upon hearing this orders that a new suit of his own clothing the brought for the Marquis of Carabas to wear. They thank him kindly and the King invites the Marquis and the cat to ride in the carriage with him. The cat declines. and goes ahead of the carriage. As he passes workers, mowers and reapers in the fields, he threatens that if they do not tell the King that the lands that they worked belonged to the Marquis of Carabas, they would be chopped like small herbs for the pot. Of course the workers comply as the King passes and asks. Meanwhile, unaware of the cat's preparations, the youngest son looks like he is modestly admiring the fields. Then the cat comes upon a castle belonging to an Ogre, the very same Ogre to whom all of the fields that he had just convinced the workers to claim belonged to the Marquis, belonged. The cat procured an invitation into the Ogre's castle and tricks the Ogre into turning himself into a mouse which the cat immediately devours. The cat took possession of the castle, whose new owner is the Marquis of Carabas just in time to invite the King and his court to dine on a sumptuous meal. The princess falls in love with the Marquis, and their wedding was arranged by the King that very day.

The second tale, "The Mighty Mikko" seems to defy all that we know about the "Puss in Boots" tales. This version comes to us by way of Finland. Mikko is the only son of a poor woodsman and his wife. They both die in a short span of time and all that they have to leave their son is three snares. On his death bed, the father tells Mikko, "When I am dead go into the woods and if you find a wild creature caught in any of them (the snares) , free it gently and bring it home alive." After his father's death, , Mikko remembers the snares and goes out to find a fox trapped in the third one. Mikko carefully frees the fox and takes him home. The fox gets better and he and Mikko become good friends. After a short time, the fox looks up at Mikko and asks why he looks so sad. Mikko responds that he is very lonely. The fox tells Mikko to go out and look for a wife. Mikko, being too poor to even afford a poor wife laughs at the fox. The fox insists that Mikko could marry a princess and set out to find a princess for him to marry. He made his way straight to the King and requests a bushel measure which he tells the King was for his master the Mighty Mikko. Then he goes out into the fields and digs up a handful of silver and gold coins which the peasants have buried as their savings. He then places the coins in the cracks of the bushel measure and takes it back to the King. The King who has never heard of a Mikko, much less a Mighty Mikko, is anxious to see if he can find out what the bushel measure was used for. When he looks in he immediately sees the gold and silver coins and wants to know more about this rich lord who can afford to leave so many coins around. The King is informed -what Mikko is going to be leaving his home to travel to other kingdoms in search of a wife worthy of him. The King, who has a daughter is anxious to invite Mikko over so that he can meet his own daughter. Through a lot of trickery, the meeting is arranged and Mikko is to arrive in the clothes of a woodsman as a disguise and then change into some of the King's own finer clothing. Once he is at the castle, the court and the Princess fall in love with Mikko's manners and his looks. They agree that Mikko and the daughter should be married that same day. Meanwhile, the King, suspecting some sort of trickery, asks Mikko to see his home. The fox tells Mikko the way to lead the travelers and he goes on before. The fox travels quickly and tells every field hand and worker that he encounters, that on penalty of their lives, they must tell the King that the lands that they are working belong to the Mighty Mikko. He then races to the castle of Worm, the dragon who owned all of the lands that he had just cleverly given to his master and tells him the same ruse which forces him to leave his castle and seek refuge in the linen storage house under the linen. The fox then locks the storage house and burns it down, dragon and all. When Mikko and the King arrive at the lands everyone does as they are told and the King is both astonished and pleased with the wealth that the Mighty Mikko possesses. The King upon seeing the castle is little embarrassed and Mikko comforts the King by saying that when first he saw the Kings castle he thought it was the most beautiful castle that he had ever seen.

Both of our heroes in these tales, it can be said, were left inheritances by their fathers beyond their wildest imaginations. At first neither understood the value of their inheritance, but learned a valuable lesson about

passing judgment about their circumstances. Many of the children that I encounter in my classroom come from somewhat similar situations. Occasionally we have all said, I wish things could be this way. In some cases, children who come from this type of environment excel, and in some cases they do not. What I find most important in each of these tales is that the rewards are hard gained. Someone has to do the work. One negative is that in both tales, it is not the protagonist who does all of the work to achieve the end result. When teaching these stories it is important to stress that it is only through hard work and perseverance that we can achieve our goals. An important item to remember is the standard by which each hero judged his inheritance. Each character based his heart's desire on the standards of their society.

The fourth and final thematic mini unit is entitled 'Tales of Enchantment'. In this type of tale, a prince for some unknown reason is the recipient of the curse of a sorceress who changes him into a beastly creature. The curse cannot be broken unless the prince is kissed by, sleeps on the bed of, or manages to entice a princess to fall in love 'With him in his ghastly state. The most familiar of these tales are "Beauty and the Beast" and "The Frog Prince". Possibly with the exception of Beauty, the prince has to trick a shallow or lonely princess into accepting his offer. Once she does, it is all over. His curse is lifted, and his spell is broken. Included in this group for the sake of argument is a tale which is a seeming reversal of the rules of the 'tales of enchantment'. This story is "The Seal Skin." in keeping with the established mode of starting each unit off with the most familiar tale, I am starting this unit off with the tale "Beauty and the Beast" as presented in Opie's *The Classic Fairy Tales*. The story begins with a very rich merchant who has three sons and three daughters. The merchant educated his children very well. His daughters are very beautiful indeed, and of these the most beautiful by far is the youngest called 'the little beauty'. She is admired by all, except her sisters, for her charm and good nature. All at once, the merchant loses all of his wealth with the exception of the little country house where he takes all of his family to live. At length the merchant leaves home to seek his fortune and asks each of his daughters what they would have him bring home for them. The two eldest request jewels and ribbons, but Beauty asked for a rose. The father complies with the request and in doing so causes his daughter to have to live with the Beast at his castle. She does what she is asked and after a few months she asks to go home for a visit because she misses her father. She is granted the visit by way of a magic trunk. The visit is good but short. Upon her return home Beauty realizes that she both misses and loves the Beast; she talks it over with her sisters who can only see the ugly exterior of the Beast. They succeed in discouraging her decision to marry him. When she returns to Beast, she finds him on the ground in the -rose garden practically senseless. She starts to cry and admits her love for him in his beastly form. This admission transforms him into a handsome Prince who marries her at once.

In the second story of this unit, a frog which has been enchanted is sitting in a spring in the woods when a young girl happens upon the spring and sits down near it to play with her ball. At length she throws the ball up into the air and catches it until one time she throws it up too high to catch it and it falls into the spring. The spring is deep but clear and she can see her ball at the bottom, but she cannot reach it. The frog sitting there sees her little problem and tells her that he will get the ball for her if she will love him, allow him to live with her, eat from her golden plate and sleep upon her little bed. She of course, thinks that the frog is just silly and agrees. Once she has her ball, she goes along her merry way and forgets about the frog. The frog, later that evening arrived at her home and reminds her of their bargain. She reluctantly allows him to enter only because her father reminds her that a bargain is a bargain and that she must keep her word. The frog returns three nights in a row, and on the fourth night when he returns he tells the princess that he is really a prince who had been enchanted, and because of her kindness, the spell had been lifted and he had now come to take her home to his father's kingdom.

Korea gives us a tale of enchantment entitled "The Toad Bridegroom". In this tale a fisherman goes out to fish

when he discovers that his daily catch gets smaller each day of the week. On the last day that he goes out, the lake is running dry and there is a huge toad sitting in the middle of it. The fisherman curses the toad and its family for three generations. The toad says to the fisherman something to the effect of take me home and you won't be sorry, but the fisherman hurries away. The toad follows him home and is greeted cordially at the door by the fisherman's wife, who had already heard the story. He is given a bed in the corner of the kitchen and is treated by the peasants as though he were their own son. He grows to about the size of a small boy when he tells his parents that he wants to marry one of the beautiful rich girls who live next door. The mother goes to the house to make the request which she tells to the mother of the girls. The mother is quite displeased and when she tells the father, he has the frog's mother beaten. The frog apologizes for his mother's treatment and tells her not to take the incident to heart. He then ties a lantern to the foot of a hawk and in front of the bride's home he makes a seemingly heavenly request which makes the bride's father happily comply with the request for his daughter's hand in marriage. Both the first and second daughter refuse, and they chide the youngest daughter for happily complying with her father's request. All of the people in the town show up to see the spectacle that is to be the wedding of an aristocrat to a toad. The evening of the wedding night, the toad reveals himself to his wife only. The next day he puts back on the toad skin and goes out hunting with the townspeople and they are unable to find any deer. Later on that same evening the toad goes out to the field and speaks with an old man with white hair who leads a herd of deer to the toad. The toad then carries them home to his family. When he has finished presenting them to his family, he takes off his skin and transforms himself into the handsome young man and ascends into the heavens with his bride and his bride and his parents in his arms.

In the final story of this unit, "The Seal Skin," a man tricks a fairy out of her seal skin. He steals it from the mouth of a cave where she and other fairies are dancing and takes it home and locks it in a chest for safe keeping. When he returns he finds a beautiful, naked young woman seated on a rock crying. He takes her home and marries her being always careful to keep the key to the chest on his person at all times. Together they have seven children. By accident, the man leaves home one day and forgets to take the key. She finds it, unlocks the chest; and is not seen again. Several people say that they have since then seen a seal walking upright in the water with her children, others still report that to this day if one looks into a seal's eyes it is just like looking into the eyes of a child. As stated before, this tale does not fit directly in line with type 440, "The Frog Prince " sequence, but I find it to be an interesting variation on the same theme. Instead of a man, being enchanted by a fairy, we have a reversal of roles.

Each of the stories selected for the mini units was selected so that simple connections could be made easily thereby fostering a child's sense of success immediately with the units and their themes. I want the students to enjoy reading and learning and in the process enjoy the folktale as they see themselves reflected in it.

This unit is written primarily for teachers of slow learners, learning disabled, and students who are receiving chapter I services on the middle school level. It may also be used by elementary school teachers to entice low level readers and it may be used bit by bit as a supplement to reading text assignments periodically throughout the year. I intend to use the second mini unit as an ice breaker at the beginning of the year and use the rest of it to supplement the remainder of the school year. As previously stated, I have taken into consideration the population in my classroom. They require very clearly defined organization; therefore I have organized my mini units by theme. Each mini unit should first be launched with a familiar European tale because in this way my students will be able to achieve early success with the mini unit and they will be provided with a solid foundation upon which they can build. Students will not only be able to activate their prior knowledge, but also be able to re-identify with a familiar character in a new way. Students will also meet familiar characters with whom they had never previously identified and from whom they can learn new

lessons. The teacher should try to avoid reading the story to the students. Telling of tales should be modeled with the initial story in the unit, so that the students know what is expected of them when they are asked to tell an original tale or one that they have heard.

Stories selected to be a part of a mini unit were selected based on their similarity to a predetermined European tale. As a requirement, stories had to have similar motifs. Many of the selected stories end differently, and some even use different character types.

The students may be divided into small groups for reading assignments after listening to and discussing the base European tale. Each group may be assigned a single story to read and interpret and tell the class.

The following pages contain the list of stories developed for this unit and a sample of some of the lesson plans developed for unit two ... 'Where Dreams Come True.

STORY LIST

THE TRICKSTER GETS TRICKED

"Rumpelstiltskin"

"Granny Sogando"

WHERE DREAMS COME TRUE

"Cinderella"

"The Indian Cinderella"

"Salt, Sauce, and Spice

Onion Leaves, Pepper, and Drippings"

"Yeh Shin"

CLEVER ANIMALS

"The Master Cat"

"The Mighty Mikko"

TALES OF ENCHANTMENT

"Beauty and the Beast"

"The Frog Prince"

"The Toad Bridegroom"

“The Seal Skin”

OVERALL GOALS

The students will be able to:

1. Listen to and model story telling.
2. Write modernized versions of familiar stories for possible future publication.
3. Tell their own original modern Cinderella story before a captive audience.
4. Evaluate their own writing and the works of others using The Constructive Criticism Sheet.

SAMPLE VOCABULARY LIST

antagonist	princess	enchanted	hero
faithful	heroine	protagonist	brave
bewitch	fairy	king	queen
custom	frog	kiss	stepmother
clever	godmother	loyal	setting
dragon	glass slipper	lie	symbol
dwarf	honor	ogre	trickster
destiny	handsome	prince	toad
	woodsman	wand	

SAMPLE CLASSROOM OBJECTIVES

DAY I The students will be able to:

1. Listen to a telling of “Cinderella”
2. Generate a list of characteristics of the story.
3. Write a modernized version of the story which takes place in the Tri State area during the 1990’s.

PROCEDURE:

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The students will be arranged in a round-table format to listen to the story and to better facilitate discussions. Once the story is told, the students will discuss the various characteristics of all of the Cinderella stories that they know. Upon finalizing the discussion, the students will be able to generate a list (for future use) of the known common characteristics of Cinderella tales.

SHORT TERM HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT (STHA):

Worksheet number 1 CHARACTER MAKING.

LONG TERM HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:

Using your list, write a modernized version of the Cinderella tale. The story must take place in the Tri State Area during the 1990's.

EVALUATION:

discussion

list generation (participation)

for individual discussion ... Worksheet #1

DAY II The students will be able to

1. discuss their characterization worksheets individually with the teacher.
2. make a castle in an arts and crafts project.

PROCEDURE:

This is done for a grade. Each student will bring his or her worksheet up to the teacher's desk to discuss how they have responded to the questions and how they could make their character a little more believable as well as how they are expected to respond to questions in writing. Students who are not at my desk discussing their assignment will be working at their desks on an arts and crafts project.

EVALUATION:

STHW assignment

Castles

DAY III The students will be able to:

1. Generate Synonyms for each of the words on the vocabulary list.
2. Make up original crossword and word search puzzles using graph paper, their list of synonyms and a dictionary.

PROCEDURE:

Read aloud the list of vocabulary words with each student. The students should come into contact and use each word at least seven times during the course of the mini unit. (The word list should be reused with each unit unless the teacher finds other words that she would like to use in their place. The list may then be added

to in order—to further enhance the students’ reading and handle on the terms for the units.) The students should use the vocabulary in their writing as well as in their speech.

The first encounter with the words is the pronunciation and the brainstorming for synonyms instead of using a dictionary to find definitions which usually use words that the students neither know nor bother to look up. The second encounter with the vocabulary will be the creation of an original crossword puzzle which makes use of the synonyms, spelling and usage in a sentence or phrase.

EVALUATION:

Completed crossword puzzle assignment

DAY IV The students will be able to:

1. Choose an appropriate title for their new Cinderella story.
2. Plan out the course of action in their story.
3. Start to write their story.

PROCEDURE:

Using a worksheet entitled CHOOSING TITLES, the students will practice selecting a title for stories based on a provided picture. Then they will picture their character in action in their mind and appropriately title their own story. (ie., Cindi-Ella, Roamin’ Cindy or Cindy E.)

EVALUATION:

Stories will be collected and evaluated on day 5 ... not graded, but constructively evaluated so that the story can be saved for possible end-of-the-quarter reevaluation and possible publication.

DAY V and VI The students will be able to:

1. Listen to three of their classmates telling of their modern Cinderella story.
2. Make (and if selected for #1, read) constructive criticism sheets
3. Discuss peer evaluations of their work.

PROCEDURE:

Each students will be given three constructive evaluation sheets and the teacher will solicit three volunteers to read their story to the class. All students will be responsible for evaluating a combination of written and orally rendered stories. (For example, a student may evaluate one written assignment and two of the three orally rendered stories or two written and one orally rendered story.) Students will be expected to choose the best of the works that they have evaluated to be read to the writer of the story for the benefit of the entire class.

EVALUATION:

Student’s written evaluations of the works that they have read and/or listened to.

DAY VII The students will be able to:

1. Read the tale “Yeh Shin” aloud to the class.
2. Discuss the common characteristics between this tale and the European version of the tale.
 - a. Discuss also how the characters are different

PROCEDURE:

After listening to the story, the students will be asked to pull out their copy of the list of common characteristics to check their original assumptions and add to it. The students will be asked to identify possible reasons why the stories are so similar. The students will be asked to identify the differences between the two stories

EVALUATION: none.

(worksheets available in print form)

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