



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1997 Volume II: American Children's Literature

Understanding Hispanic/Latino Culture and History through the Use of Children's Literature

Curriculum Unit 97.02.06
by Jean Sutherland

Since the population of L.W. Beecher School is just slightly over 90% African American, it seems natural to me that the content of the first eight units I have written and taught has focused, at least in part, on African American culture and history, through the use of literature, particularly poetry. Not only do the lessons in these units serve to increase pupils' intellectual understanding of their African American heritage, but hopefully they also increase their self-awareness and help to develop a more positive self-esteem. However, the emergence of two factors has prompted me to change the focus of this year's unit.

First, there has been a slow but growing number of Latino/Hispanic students enrolled in my classroom. Though most were born in the United States, some have spent most of their lives in Puerto Rico or another country whose predominant culture is a blending of Native Indian, Spanish, and /or African roots. Second, through other educational projects, I have seen and read about the positive effects which multicultural education has had upon all students. As a result, this year's unit will use children's literature as a means of increasing pupil awareness, understanding, and appreciation of Hispanic/Latino culture and history, along with the roles various Latino men and women have played in the historical development of the United States. As is the case when African American history and culture are the focus of study, all pupils, no matter what their racial or ethnic background, should reap the benefits of these proposed educational experiences.

Presently, I am teaching a third grade classroom of twenty-six pupils, three Latino/Hispanic and twenty-three African Americans. They range in age from those who recently have turned eight to some who are almost ten. They come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds and home situations. Their academic ability and the level of their general knowledge also vary considerably. While some qualify for the city's Talented and Gifted Program, generally their basic academic skill level is below average. Most have potential well beyond their present level of performance. Some are members of families with multiple problems. Few of their lives are without difficulties. At this stage of their educational life, most enjoy school but not just for the academics. Many, though not all, parents or guardians are supportive of school. Most want to be helpful but are not sure of the best way to go about it. Often the struggles of everyday life interfere with their efforts.

Though the activities of this unit are written with this type of classroom in mind, the general approach and content easily could be adapted to pupils in other settings and at higher grade levels. In fact, a number of suggested selections are excerpts from stories whose content level ranges as high as that of an adult.

General Method of Approach

This unit will utilize both fictional and non-fictional works in pursuing these goals. Though developing reading skills will be the foundation of most lessons, the unit will be interdisciplinary in approach, touching on many other areas of the curriculum. Activities, especially those related to cultural traditions, will be shared with other classrooms and some will be a part of the Beecher Team's culminating activity during the Spring of the following year. Units written by the other three members of the Beecher Team also appear in this volume. All of these units aim to increase pupils' understanding and appreciation of different groups and cultures from their own.

The two key curriculum areas involved in the teaching of this unit are reading and social studies. Though at times activities will involve these subjects independently, generally they will be closely integrated, since one will strengthen understanding in the other. Generally the social studies component will flow from the reading. Examining the folk tales of Puerto Rico and Mexico cannot help but clarify the picture of colonial life as it existed in these areas as well as giving a glimpse of cultural traditions and beliefs. Another strong component of this unit is its relationship to New Haven's Social Development Curriculum. The personal and group issues raised in most of the suggested reading material easily lend themselves to activities related to this area. Role-playing is an excellent vehicle which will be used here.

Discussing whether Carlos, in *That Bad Carlos* by Mina Lewiton, is really "bad", exploring the pressures that motivated him, and examining whether pupils have ever done anything similar to the "bad" things Carlos did, are just samples of the many socially relevant topics which present themselves for consideration in most stories suggested in this unit.

Getting Started

Beginning almost immediately during the school year, as part of my daily read-aloud time, I will include stories which relate in some way to Latino/Hispanic culture or which depict Latino/Hispanic characters engaged in the various everyday roles that they have become accustomed to seeing African American and Anglo characters portray in children's literature. Young Santiago's attempt to gain acceptance from his classmates, in *Santiago*, by Pura Belpre, is an experience all pupils have felt, as is the joy he feels after accomplishing that task. The discussion which occurs during these readings will be related to the story which is being presented but will also be establishing background for more directed study in the future.

Most, and perhaps all, of the children's books and excerpts listed in my bibliography would be appropriate for use during read-aloud time. Some, however, have specific purposes, such as *Cesar Chavez: Union Leader*, by Bruce Concord, and should be grouped and presented accordingly. The teacher should be aware that segments of novels designed for older readers are often quite appropriate for younger pupils. Some can be used to meet a specific purpose. Through the eyes of Juanita, in *Juanita Fights the School Board*, by Gloria Velasquez, we learn details concerning the December 12 celebration for the Virgin de Guadalupe, patron saint of Mexico, an event the class will examine in more detail.

Simultaneously, items from current events will also be presented as they occur, hopefully beginning early in the year. Where possible, these items will be related to previous readings, investigations, or discussions, or

they will be used to initiate such activities. Newspaper articles on topics such as the eruption of a volcano near Mexico City during July of this year, as well as information and pictures on local holidays and festivals will be read by or to the class as they happen.

As the unit develops, these oral readings will continue, but now will be accompanied by both silent and group readings of related short stories. A number of these can be found in New Haven's basic reading series published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. "A Gift for Tia Rosa," by Karen Taha, in the third grade text contains a moving account of a young girl's relationship with an older woman who is dying and the gifts they gave to each other. It is a story that seems to move pupils emotionally, opening the way for valuable discussion and/or writing.

Selections such as this example from the series will allow the class to read together. Each grade level contains a few relevant entries, some of which are listed in the bibliography. Related academic skills developed by the text may also be used with each story. Depending upon the situation, stories from past grades and even future grades might be read, by either the group or the teacher. Chapter books by Gary Soto and other authors popular with children are sometimes available through Scholastic Book Services and might be purchased in numbers for both group and independent reading.

An Examination of the Past

In conjunction with these reading activities, in the area of social studies, we will begin developing a general understanding of Latino/Hispanic history and culture in the United States. An attempt will be made to show both the similarities and differences among the various individual groups that are often lumped together as a whole. Children will learn that Hispanics/Latinos are not one nationality or culture, but many. Activities from other areas of the curriculum, such as art, music, and drama, will be integrated to reinforce the information we gain through reading. An investigation into the lives and contributions of specific Latino/Hispanic men and women will be an important part of this section. This thrust of our investigation will begin by presenting the class with a general picture of the location, geography, and climate of Mexico, Central America, South America, Puerto Rico, and other representative countries of the Caribbean. This will be achieved through map study, selected readings, and the use of videos. Pupils will work together making picture and relief maps of these various regions.

Our historical investigation will examine Native Indian groups of the regions, Spanish conquest and colonization, and subsequent revolt and further conquest, until we reach the point where children have a general picture of each area's historical developments and have some understanding of its present relationship to the United States. As this is happening, information about the cultural heritage of each group will be an integral part of learning. Special emphasis will be placed on learning about the development of native civilizations, their accomplishments and contributions. The historical roles played by prominent individuals should also emerge in a natural manner at this point.

As teachers use this unit, the detail and intensity of this search for understanding from the past should vary with the needs, abilities, and time constraints of each classroom, but, in some form, it is an essential step in this unit's progression. The materials used by each teacher will vary, too. Some which have been helpful to me are listed in the bibliography. Most must be adapted for younger children. Also many of the fictional stories which the group will be reading and listening to contain historical references which will reinforce the pupils'

more formal investigations. This is particularly true in folk tales which often refer to the rigors of the plantation system and the poverty faced by the common people.

A Look at the Present

At this point, the focus of social studies lessons will turn to more recent historical developments, examining issues such as illegal immigration, conditions in Cuba, trade with Mexico, the struggles of migrant workers, and the future of Puerto Rico. Again, much of this material must be adapted for use with younger children. Also, there are some, but not many references to these issues in the children's literature we will be reading. Newspapers and current events magazines often contain relevant information.

Though a knowledge of outstanding Hispanic/Latino Americans from more recent history should flow naturally from the group's readings and studies, a specific section will attempt to reinforce and add to the list of individuals pupils have encountered. Eventually, children will be asked to investigate and compile information on prominent Latino/Hispanic Americans using appropriate references. They will create related visual aids, put their material together in a logical, interesting manner, and present the results to the class in an oral report. Some reports will also be presented to other classrooms on the team. Reports may be done individually, in pairs, and perhaps as part of a small group. A list of Latinos/Hispanics who might be covered could include the mural artist Diego Rivera, the labor leader Cesar Chavez, the government leader Henry Cisneros, Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard, the baseball player Roberto Clemente, and many others.

An Examination of Relevant Themes

Throughout the literature children are exposed to in this unit, a number of recurring themes present themselves. Recognition of these themes is an important step in achieving a clearer understanding and appreciation of Hispanic/Latino culture and history, this unit's goal. In order to help pupils focus on these themes, the teacher needs to be aware of their presence. I will list a few I believe to be important.

1. *A Connection to "Home"* : In varying degrees, most selections in this unit show the connection that characters feel to the area from which they or their ancestors emigrated. Not all feelings are positive, some are not; most are mixed.

In *When I Was Puerto Rican* , by Esmeralda Santiago, we see the negative side of a rather chaotic childhood mixed with the love and understanding Santiago found in rural Puerto Rico. In contrast, the parents in Eve Bunting's *Going Home* seem to have an almost mystical connection to their early life in Mexico. In both *That Bad Carlos* and *Santiago* , the central characters relinquish some of their ties to their homeland for the challenges and excitement of a new life. This quest for the "opportunities" that originally lured most Hispanics/Latinos to the United States occurs throughout most listed readings.

2. *Language* : Since all suggested stories are written in English, many pupils will not immediately realize that most characters are speaking, at least part of the time, in Spanish. This needs to be made clear to pupils so that they may appreciate the obstacles which this language barrier has presented to most Hispanics/Latinos. Hopefully they will also recognize the strengths which this initial barrier has helped to foster: a unity among Spanish-speaking people, a need and desire to learn, and the value of being able to use two languages.

Despite their daughter's attempts to teach them, the parents in *Going Home* speak only Spanish. Carlos in *That Bad Carlos* immediately sets out to master his English lessons. Illustrating a negative effect which the dominant culture can have upon Spanish speaking people, Lincoln and his mother, in Gary Soto's *Taking Sides* , find that their Spanish is getting worse and they are using English even at home since they have moved into a more affluent community.

Most authors have taken a somewhat bilingual approach to writing their works. Though the story is largely written in English, at appropriate times Spanish is inserted. Sometimes there is an explanation within the context, but sometimes there is not. Many books include a brief Spanish-English glossary.

In a related activity, the class will take time to examine some Spanish words and phrases which have entered the English language. Adios, amigo, casa, mosquito, sombrero, loco, junta, hacienda, and macho are but a few. A longer list of suggestions appears toward the end of the unit.

3. *Prejudice* : In many books for young children, the issue of prejudice against Hispanic/Latino people is not dealt with in a very direct manner, but it can be found. Though the events in *That Bad Carlos* and *Santiago* take place in what appear to be two isolated Spanish-speaking communities, no mention is made of the fact that these communities appear to have been isolated by the workings of prejudice. The works of Gary Soto geared toward slightly older children show both ethnic and social prejudice. In *The Pool Party* , Rudy's sister Estela is ashamed when she must accompany her family to the home of stuck-up Mindy to do some gardening work for Mindy's family. Mindy lives up to her reputation and then displays shock that Rudy has been invited to a pool party given by a well-to-do classmate. In *Taking Sides* , as Lincoln struggles with his loyalties to his new suburban, white friends and his Hispanic buddies back at Franklin, he encounters his coach's prejudice against Puerto Ricans.

More direct references to prejudice can be found in a number of the stories listed in the bibliography. In *When I Was Puerto Rican* , Esmeralda Santiago's account of United States efforts to feed and improve the hygiene of Puerto Rico around election time are both humorous and sad. The ignorance and disregard shown toward the people of Macun soon erases the humor. *Hispanic, Female, and Young: An Anthology* devotes a section to poems and short stories on prejudice. In *Juanita Fights the School Board* , the issue of prejudice is present throughout the book, ranging from the school faculty and school board to the people who stare when they see a group of Chicano and African American teens together at a mall. (More details and ideas for dealing with the issues presented in this book can be found in the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute files under another unit I have written: 95.04.08)

4. *The Importance of Family, Church, and Community* : Since aspects of this theme are found in all selections listed with this unit, I will omit any specific references. However, the unifying and sustaining influence of these interrelated factors in Hispanic/Latino life needs to be stressed. An interesting investigation and discussion might compare and contrast these three areas of life with the same areas in African-American life, bringing out the similarities and uniqueness of each, for they have and continue to help sustain both groups through times of great stress.

Holidays and Food

Finally it seems hard to talk about a culture and not examine its holidays and especially its foods. . . . for who does not wish to celebrate and eat?

Celebrations and food play a major role in most selections which the children will hear or read. Aspects of some holidays will be re-enacted by the class. Children will read about others. Food will be a part of these celebrations, along with art work, costuming, and music. Parts of these celebrations will be shared with other members of the Beecher Team and hopefully will be part of our culminating activity.

Representative foods will be sampled and simple recipes attempted. Pupils will be encouraged to bring in family recipes or perhaps the final product. Rice, beans, mangoes, plantains, guavas, and other ingredients can be obtained easily at local food stores. Hispanic/Latino parents will be enlisted to assist in these endeavors. Perhaps there can be some contrasting, comparing, and sharing of foods from other cultures. Undoubtedly, such sharing will be a part of the team's culminating activity.

Working as Part of a Team

The number of days needed to teach this unit can vary considerably depending upon the individual situation. In my classroom, we will begin slowly, but at once. Activities will continue, growing in intensity until April when the team will present its culminating program. Throughout the year, the team will meet to formulate, alter, and develop further plans as the individual units unfold. The team will continually strive to develop methods of sharing techniques and information among classrooms as we move toward our final joint activity. Involving parents will be an integral part of our planning throughout. Though specific plans have not been made, units will probably be integrated into after-school activities. The units which form the basis of our team are all part of this volume, and all of them attempt to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the diversity existing among people. They are written by Karen Carazo, Geraldine Martin, and Felicia Renee McKinnon. Though each of these units can easily be taught in isolation, the team firmly believes that through working together in a cooperative manner, among ourselves and along with parents, we are better able to maximize the positive accomplishments our students achieve.

SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

Lesson One

Eve Bunting's Going Home

Subject Matter Areas : Reading, vocabulary development, social studies, language arts, art, social development.

Objectives :

Increased understanding of "home" as a force in one's life.

Increased understanding of the effect a knowledge of one's "roots" can have upon an individual, a family, or a people.

Increased knowledge of one's own roots.

Increased awareness of the positives in one's own life.

Increased understanding of the life faced by many farm laborers.

Ability to construct a representative collage.

Ability to interview and to present findings in oral and written form.

Vocabulary : Si papeles, labor manager, opportunities, scattering (n), *Procedure* : Together with its intriguing pictures, *Going Home* is an almost mystical brief story written by Eve Bunting and illustrated by David Diaz. It traces the journey of Carlos and his family across the border from California to Mexico to visit the village of their parents. Though unimpressed at first, Carlos and his older sister begin to understand and develop a connection to their roots in Mexico. They come to realize the sacrifices which their parents have made in order to provide them with "opportunities".

We are also given glimpses of the tenant farm system under which Carlos and his family live, as well as of the typical Mexican villages and the landscape which they pass through on their journey. Though the book itself is short, numerous opportunities for discussion present themselves along the way: What is it like to labor in the fields? Why do Mama and Papa continue to speak Spanish? Why does Carlos keep trying to teach them English? Why does Mama blow kisses when they reach Mexico? What is meant by opportunities? What have the parents sacrificed and gained? Do you think it was worth it?

The beautifully colorful illustrations are panels of semi-abstract pictures appearing on a mosaic background which in most cases seems to be made of overlapping ornaments. Each panel is framed in a sometimes ornate wrought-iron border. Some of the illustrations have an unreal quality with people and objects floating through the air.

Children will be asked to interpret both the background and the framed panels: What do you see? What do you think the picture is telling us? Is there meaning in the background? How do you feel about the way the artist illustrated the text? How would you have illustrated the book?

After appropriate discussion, the children will be asked to list things about their own home and life which they would like to remember as they grow older. They will be then given an opportunity to make a collage of pictures depicting a combination of these remembrances. They may draw, cut out pictures, or use words in their depictions. They will be placed on construction paper, discussed, and displayed appropriately.

After discussing visits which students have made to the homes of grandparents or other older relatives, they will be asked to interview an adult family member about their recollections of their early home. Pupils will record (written or taped) their remembrances and report them to the class. They may also be asked to organize their material into an interesting written narrative with appropriate illustrations

Lesson Two

Geography and Population

Subject Matter Areas : Social studies, math.

Objectives : Ability to identify and locate the states and cities in which there is a relatively high Latino/Hispanic American population.

Increased understanding of the factors influencing the location of Latino/Hispanic American population.

Ability to develop a representative bar and picture graph.

Develop a basic understanding of percent.

Vocabulary : Population, percentage, bar graph, picture graph.

Procedure : In September, most third graders come into class with little concept of city, state, and country location and the factors which differentiate these units. This is something which is gradually developed throughout the year. By focusing on Latino/Hispanic Americans, this unit provides an excellent opportunity to help in developing these goals in a meaningful manner.

As different cities, states, and countries are encountered through various activities, they will be located on appropriate maps. As pupil understanding of location grows, the group will investigate population figures in order to discover the United States cities and states with the highest number of Latino/Hispanic Americans. These cities and states will be labeled on a group map and on individual maps held by each pupil. Discussion will speculate on the reasons for the present configurations. These factors would include: the geographic location, the availability of jobs, location of relatives, and the security offered by an existing Latino/Hispanic population.

Since many references present Latino/Hispanic American population in the form of percentages, pupils will need to acquire a basic understanding of this concept. The same is true concerning the ability to read bar and

picture graphs. All of this knowledge can be developed through material presented in the systems math program.

When this understanding is achieved, pupils will be able to convert totals and percentages into graphic representations. With younger students the teacher will probably have to give considerable assistance in breaking down larger numbers which the students will then be able to depict graphically. Resulting graphs will then be shared, discussed, and displayed. Since population figures constantly change, the teacher needs to periodically update figures. In a "page" devoted to "Hispanic Americans", which the New Haven Register published on September 25, 1994, the percentage of Latino/Hispanic population in each state where that population is higher than the national average is listed along with the ten United States cities with the largest Latino/Hispanic populations. Similar facts may be found in some of the references listed in the bibliography.

Lesson Three

Spanish Words in English

Subject Matter Areas : Reading, vocabulary development, social studies.

Vocabulary : See list at conclusion of lesson.

Objectives :

Increase the range of each student's vocabulary.

Allow students to understand the Spanish origins of many words which have become a normal part of the English language.

Develop the ability to use these words in written and oral context.

Increase pupils' understanding of Latino/Hispanic history and influence through examining these words.

Procedure : As has been mentioned, though many authors of Latino/Hispanic American literature for children have written their stories primarily in English, they frequently insert Spanish words and phrases into the context. Often a Spanish-English glossary is included to aid the non-Spanish speaking reader, but many of these words are so familiar to most readers that a formal definition is not needed. Other words that pupils have and will encounter have become so integrated into the English language that they, and most others, have no idea of their Spanish connection. Directly examining these words and their roots will both increase each pupil's vocabulary range and add to their awareness of one of the ties we all have to Spanish influences.

Two approaches will be used in order to achieve this goal. First, as the class reads or listens to various written material, the teacher will point out words which have Spanish origins and are appropriate to the level of understanding of the class. Words will be defined, either by the teacher, the group, or an individual student. Words will be written on an expanding classroom list, while each pupil will keep a personal booklet containing words and definitions. The teacher will present a more detailed account of the derivation of some words. References such as John Ayton's *Dictionary of Word Origins* contain concise, interesting examinations, of the

history behind many of these words. *The Oxford English Dictionary* is the most complete and authoritative source, 1989 edition.

In the second approach, the teacher will select a few (2-5) words that will be examined during the week. They will be approached in much the same manner, but they will not necessarily be related to something that is currently being read. These words will also be added to the growing list.

As it grows, the list may become the source of "game" type educational activities: Conduct a "bee" in which brief definitions are required instead of, or along with, accurate spelling. Modify this approach by requiring pupils to use the words correctly in context. Have pupils take a group of related words and create an interesting paragraph or brief story. Create and use flashcards with the word and definition of opposite sides.

Here is a small list of suggestions; many more words could be added.

adios	amigo	casa	mosquito	sombrero
loco	junta	hacienda	macho	lariat
canyon	sierra	adobe	cargo	San Francisco
cork	plaza	salsa	mantilla	Colorado
tornado	stampede	potato	alligator	Nevada
taco	hammock	burro	serape	senorita

Bibliography@Ref: Though the focus varies, each of the books listed below is of value to both teacher and pupil. Some may need considerable modification for use with elementary students, but all possess potential for enhancing understanding. The annotations by each entry should clarify the primary focus of each.

Belpre, Pura. *Santiago*. New York: Frederick Warne and Company, 1996. Young Santiago adjusts to life in America, while retaining his ties with his roots in Puerto Rico. Most suitable for second to fourth grades.

Belpre, Pura. *The Tiger and the Rabbit and other tales*. New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1965.

Excellent collection of Hispanic folk tales. Suitable for all grades.

Burnett, Bernice. *Holidays* . New York: Franklin Watts, 1983.

Examines holidays celebrated by different groups and countries. Includes some which are celebrated by Hispanic/Latino people.

Bunting, Eve. *Going Home* . New York: Harper Collins, 1996.

As Carlos and his family travel across the border from California to Mexico for a Christmas visit to his parents' former home, we learn about the land we pass, the relationships among family members, and the pull of "home". Unique illustrations and message should make it appealing to all ages.

Cameron, Ann. *The Most Beautiful Place in the World* . New York: Random House, 1988.

Juan's life in the mountains of Guatemala is bleak, but his loving grandmother and his own determination lead us to have hope for his future. As it depicts Guatemalan village life, the story presents social and family issues familiar to many pupils.

Catalano, Julie. *The Mexican Americans*. New York: Chelsea House, 1988. Traces the history of Mexican Americans from the Spanish conquest until the mid-twentieth century. Considerable material on customs. Large number of photographs and sketches. Suitable for both teacher and pupils.

Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street* . New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1994.

Through the use of colorful anecdotes about the author's youth on Mango Street, we examine both the neighborhood and different aspects of Hispanic culture. Some sections are quite appropriate for elementary students.

Concord, Bruce. *Cesar Chavez* . New York: Chelsea Juniors, 1992.

Interesting, informative biography. Good third grade reader could handle most of material. Contains photographs.

Epstein, Sam and Beryl. *Mexico* . New York: Franklin Watts, 1983.

Contains pertinent historical information which could be used directly or modified for younger children.

Farr, Roger, ed. *HBJ Treasury of Literature: A Most Unusual Sight* . Munoz, William. "Words from the Photographer." New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1993.

Farr, Roger, ed. *HBJ Treasury of Literature: Like a Thousand Diamonds* . Taha, Karen. "A Gift for Tia Rosa." Sierra, Paul. "Sierra' Mystery Picture." New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1993.

Gann, L.H. and Duignan, Peter. *The Hispanics in the United States* . Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1986.

Gives the teacher a survey of the history, politics, and culture of all major Hispanic groups. Contains debate on political and social issues.

Hundley, Norris, ed. *The Chicano* . Santa Barbara, California: Clio Books, 1975.

This collection of essays by Chicano and Anglo authors gives the teacher a more personal look at Chicano history and life in the Southwestern United States.

Lewiton, Mina. *That Bad Carlos* . New York; Harper Row, 1964.

Moving with his family to New York from Puerto Rico to tend an uncle's store, young Carlos somehow manages to entangle himself in a variety of problems. Beyond the plot, this book examines Hispanic life in New York. Excellent for elementary grades.

Meltzer, Milton. *Hispanic Americans* . New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1982.

Main focus is on three Hispanic groups; Puerto Rican, Mexican, and Cuban. Discusses background and present day social problems. Interspersed with personal accounts by individuals who have experienced hardships. Interesting and informative. Contains photographs. Primarily for teacher, but it could be modified for use with pupils.

Soto, Gary. *Jesse* . New York: Scholastic Press, 1994.

Living in central California, a young Mexican American and his brother leave home in an attempt to better themselves in the face of racism and class distinctions. Presents the bleakness and futility faced by most migrant farmers. Suitable for middle school and higher.

Soto, Gary. *The Pool Party* . New York: Delacorte Press, 1993.

While giving us a picture of Mexican American family life, this story also examines the relationships among Latino youth from different social and economic circumstances. Most suitable for upper elementary and middle school.

Soto, Gary. *Taking Sides* . New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1991. A young Mexican American high school boy moves with his mother to a mostly white suburb where he feels the pull of loyalty to his old school and neighborhood. More suitable for upper elementary grades and middle school.

Samora, Julian. *A History of the Mexican American People* . Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977.

Excellent reference for the teacher both on history and present mood.

Rochman, Hazel. *Against Borders* . Chicago: ALA Books, 1993.

A survey of children's books with multicultural themes. Very thorough and judicious.

Shorris, Earl. *Latinos* . New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1992.

This book gives the teacher a more personal look at Latino/Hispanic history and life by using biographical sketches of individuals of different Latino backgrounds and attitudes.

Santiago, Esmeralda. *When I was Puerto Rican* . New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1994.

An inspiring story of the author's early life in Puerto Rico, her move to the United States, and her ultimate success as an author. Oral reading and discussion of selected portions would be quite appropriate for elementary students.

Tashlik, Phyllis, ed. *Hispanic, Female and Young: An Anthology* . Houston, Texas: Pinata Books, 1994.

Velasquez, Gloria. *Juanita Fights the School Board* . Huston Texas: Pinata Books, 1994.

After being unfairly expelled from her high school, Junita, a poor Mexican American living in San Diego during the 1990's, decides to fight the decision. Presents an excellent picture of Junita's social and family environment, along with the prejudices she faced. Many opportunities for discussion. Selected excerpts would be appropriate for elementary grades.

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