



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1998 Volume V: Reading Across the Cultures

Travel through Children's Literature into the Lives of the People of Our Nation

Curriculum Unit 98.05.03
by Nancy Taylor Skolozdra

This unit is designed to use children's literature as the catalyst with which to explore several different cultures and areas of the United States. It has been patterned as a whole-language, integrated reading, language arts, social studies curriculum to be employed in a self-contained third grade classroom where the reading levels range from third grade to fifth grade within that classroom.

This unit uses multiple copies of eight culturally diverse novels to nurture a love for reading as a lifelong source of enjoyment, information, and overall expansion and challenge to the mind as well as a base from which to look at four cultures, within our own nation, as the skills of the language arts are developed. The curriculum standards governing the content taught in the New Haven Public schools, at the third grade level, drive the goals and objectives of the lessons developed to accompany the readings of these eight primary books.

The reading of the literature includes activities for building background, developing vocabulary strategies and key words, previewing and predicting, setting a purpose, and the actual independent guided reading of each text. This unit includes opportunities for personal responses to the literature through summarizing, writing, and critical thinking. It provides direction for utilizing the stories to teach in context the language arts skills included in the third grade curriculum.

The integration of these authentic pieces of children's literature into a study of several cultures within our nation provides the unit's magnet. It draws the children to a place, creates a bond, and springboards an exploration into the daily lives of others who at a closer look are really very much like them. Various non-fiction children's books and computer research supply the information base for the children to successfully accomplish the social studies objectives of this unit.

Two books, *Later, Gator* by Laurence Yep and *Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear* by Lensey Namioka, are utilized to transport third graders into the lives of two Chinese American boys. These children have family traditions, foods and daily activities that are based on their Chinese culture intertwined with feelings, friendships, and sibling rivalries that every eight or nine year old can identify with. *Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear* takes place in the city of Seattle. This setting launches an exploration of the state of Washington as an avenue for social studies integration with the language arts.

Two books, *Toughboy & Sister* by Kirkpatrick Hill, and the Newberry Gold-medal winning children's novel *Julie*

of the Wolves by Jean Craighead George, launch third graders on a journey north to Alaska where they become involved in the life of the Inuit. Both books provide opportunities to witness the wilderness life through the eyes of children their age. Students gain an understanding of the commonality of growing up. They experience familiar emotions with the characters in these pieces of literature that help bring their own lives into focus. Filled with the culture and tradition of the Inuit people of today's Alaska these two novels provide many possibilities for incorporating social studies and history into the reading, language arts curriculum.

Two books, *Justin and the Best Biscuits In The World* by Mildred Pitt Walter, and Eloise Greenfield's first novel for young people *Sister*, celebrate the rich contribution that African Americans have made to the development of the midwestern part of the United States along with the strong bonding of the extended family which is such a celebrated part of the black culture. This unit, through the reading of *Justin and the Best Biscuits In The World*, explores the development of the midwestern states through the careers of freed slaves who became famous cowboys, Nat Love, Bill Pickett, and Holt Collier. Also within this unit a look at the state of Missouri adds to the development of a sense of our nation as a diverse yet united family.

The last two pieces of children's literature utilized to generate a comprehension of the cultures which strengthen our nation, as we develop an appreciation for their special uniqueness along with a feeling of oneness, are two books in *The American Girls Collection*. *Meet Josefina* and *Josefina Learns a Lesson* by Valerie Tripp are the first two books in an unfolding series which explores the Mexican culture within the history of New Mexico. Each book contains a glossary and a section entitled "A Look Into The Past" which assists the children in gaining a clear understanding of the setting of the historical fiction novel they are reading. Through the growing up of Josefina introductions to Mexican foods, crafts, traditions, and family life are accomplished along with a recognition of feelings, and experiences common to all the children whose lives this study has joined together.

The effective utilization of the language of our nation is an essential element in the comprehensive understanding of the viewpoints of different cultures. This unit centers around developing the reading, writing, listening and speaking skills of children while guiding them in an exploration of the diversity of our nation. It is laid out to use literature as the unifying element. It nurtures a feeling of strength and pride in the vastness of the heterogeneity that is our national heritage.

The magnet of the chapter books included in this unit takes the children on a journey through history, geography, and into the lives of families and children. They are transported through the written word to places, experiences, and feelings without leaving the security of classroom or neighborhood until they have strengthen their wings enough to soar on their own.. The skills developed in this comprehensive whole-language, integrated curriculum unit promote the celebration of diversity while it perfects communication skills, both essential to the success of our nation in the twenty-first century.

Organizational Strategies for Planning

This whole-language integrated unit is organized around the lives of children from four different cultural heritages within the United States, as depicted by the authors of eight middle elementary reading level books. The exploration of each book is outlined in a separate section allowing for ease in use as individual book studies or as an inclusive multicultural reading, language arts, social studies integrated curriculum at the

middle elementary level.

The first study, African-American culture, introduces the multicultural explorations by allowing the children of my 98% Black population to learn about their own heritage before moving into cultures that may be unfamiliar to them. Inuit, Chinese, and Hispanic respectively move the children along in their acquisition of knowledge as they develop their language skills. Each exploration includes a variety of reading-level books both fiction and non-fiction to accommodate all the children in the classroom. The studies may be taught in any order culminating with a summary activity to bring closure to the unit.

Each book study has strategies for building background through accessing the prior knowledge of the students. Key words are introduced to the children before the reading of the story as well as strategies for using clues to determine meaning of the key words in the context of the story.

Each book study has a plan for the reading of each book which includes; previewing, predicting, setting a purpose for reading, and the guided reading of the story.

Each study has an opportunity for the children to respond to the literature through a variety of writing, summarizing and critical thinking activities.

Each study has Language Arts activities which guide the children to learn through literature.

Finally each study includes integrated activities to promote the multicultural social studies focus of the unit as a whole.

@Text:To make this unit teacher-friendly the books found in the bibliography that complement each individual study are listed with the study that they are intended to enhance and extend.

Justin and the Best Biscuits In The World

by Mildred Pitts Walter

Social Studies focus
African-American
Missouri
History
Black Cowboys

About the book

This book gives children a look into a part of African American history that is little known to most third graders, the story of the Black Cowboy. This book sends the reader on a self-awareness journey with Justin, who feels he can't do anything right. The book also gives the reader a look at African American migration to

Missouri after the Civil War. @\$:

The story takes the reader from Justin's home in the city, where he lives with his mother and sisters, to his grandfather's ranch where he learns real men's work. Justin learns family history. Most importantly he learns to feel good about himself through the gentle, sensitive, "real man" his loving grandfather.

Reading the Literature

Building background

Students in a whole class discussion create a chart containing all the facts they know about cowboys, ranching, rodeos, etc. This will tap into the knowledge that the children are bringing with them to the story.

Vocabulary

Included here are a list of key words and phrases which enhance the meaning of the story and increase the comprehension skills of the reader. These key words need not be introduced before the reading but can be taught in context as each chapter is read and discussed.

tetherball (p. 2) -- challenge(p. 2) -- "weather the storm" (p. 6) --

retorted (p. 7) -- mimicked (p. 11) -- aggressive (p.14) --- frustrated(p. 18)--

dazed (p. 22) -- tranquil (p. 29) --stampede (p. 31) -- gleaming (p. 35) --

shimmered (p. 36) --wallowing(p. 39) -- surge(p. 52) -- sorghum (p. 82) --

tribulations(p..82) -- veterans (p. 83) -- competition (p. 85) --

contestant (p. 92) -- embroidery (p. 96) -- disqualified(p. 104) --

triumph(p. 110)--

Guided Reading

It is important for the children to prepare for the reading of this story by previewing the book. This can be done with a simple activity where the children pair up with another student and make a list of things that they think the story is going to be about. They can at the same time make a list of predictions of what they think will happen in the story. The children will report back to the class with the results of their investigations. With a class chart of predictions the class will be ready to read the book to find out if their predictions will take place.

Paired reading is a great way to read this book. A strong reader paired with a weak reader make a good team. With book in hand and a set of discoveries to make in each chapter students embark on their journey into Justin's life and African American history of the west.

Chapter1: Discover the following things about Justin. Look for the author's clues!

Justin's feelings about his sisters. Justin's feelings about his grandfather.

Chapter2 : Discover Justin and "women's work". What happened to Justin's father? How does he feel about it?

What makes Anthony a good friend?

Chapter3: Discover what kind of a person grandpa is. Do you know anybody like him?

Chapter 4 :Discover what Justin enjoys during his trip to the ranch. Look for clues that Justin has been to the ranch before.

Chapter 5 :Discover how grandfather helps Justin.

Chapter6: Discover why the title of this chapter is "riding fence." Why does the author includes the incident with the doe? What is she trying to show about grandpa?

Chapter7 : Discover two famous black cowboys. What does this have to do with the story?

Chapter8: Discover what journal Justin reads and why it is so important to him.

Chapter9 :Discover the relationship that Justin has with his grandpa. What are the things that Justin reads that make him sad.

Chapter10: Discover Justin as a good sport.

Chapter11: Discover why Justin's accomplishments in this chapter are important to the story.

Chapter12:Discover how Justin has changed. Discover how his sister's feelings for Justin have changed.

Responding to the Literature

Children will respond to the story, learn summarizing skills, develop letter writing skills through the use of responding through writing.

Write a letter to Anthony while you are visiting grandpa on the ranch. Be sure to tell all you have learned and done while there.

Integrated Curriculum

Social Studies

This book opens the door for a study of black cowboys and the state of Missouri. Four non fiction resource books provide the background information to help the children work in small groups to create a whole class project for the sharing of their discoveries.

From Sea to Shining Sea, Missouri by Dennis Fradin and Judith Bloom Fradin, gives children a look into the past as well as a window on Missouri as it is today.

Holt and the Cowboy by Jim McCafferty, *Bill Pickett* by Andrea D. Pinkney, and

Nat Love by Robert Miller, offer exciting looks at the lives of three famous black cowboys.

Nat Love is a part of American folklore and a legend of the Old West. He was born a slave in Tennessee in 1854. He learned his cowboy skills while a slave. After the Civil War Nat went west to be an American citizen. There he drove cattle on the Chisholm Trail.

Holt Collier was born a slave in Mississippi. He learned to train horses while a slave. Holt fought in the Civil War in the Texas Brigade. After the war was over he spent most of his life training horses for the officer friends he had made during the war.

Bill Pickett's father was born into slavery. He grew up on the Texas plains branding cattle and swinging a rope. After the Civil War he settled as a free man in Texas. He had a son Bill. When Bill was fifteen he went out on his own working as a cowhand on ranches all over Texas. He became known all over for his abilities. He entered rodeos and became famous in America, Canada, and South America. He even preformed in England for the king and Queen. He died in 1932. He was the first African American inducted into the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

*****Black Cowboy Cooperative group project.*****

Objective: Children will learn through investigative research an extended amount of information on the topics found in their fiction reading. Children will investigate several black cowboys and the state of Missouri using books and print resources provided by the school library and the classroom teacher (see bibliography). Children will use technology resources to supplement their print research data. Children will demonstrate their acquired knowledge through various media, constructed to meet the different learning styles of the students. These products of learning will become part of the classroom environment as the multicultural study progresses.

Class Grouping: Heterogeneous cooperative learning groups of four children.

Procedure: Each group chooses a particular person or area to gather information on then presents that information in a way that best represents what they want to share and how they want to share it with the class.

Choices for sharing: charts, written reports, books, plays, poetry, pictures, maps, timelines, and dioramas.

Assessment:

The oral sharing with the class of the group investigations.
The completed projects on display in the classroom.

Sister

by Eloise Greenfield

Social Studies Focus
African-American urban women studies

About the book

This book is a story of a young girl in a single parent family. A strong mother struggling to keep it together. It is a story of family love and strength. It is a story of sadness and hardships. It is the story of Doretha who is afraid she's going the way of her headed for trouble, older sister, Alberta.

This is Doretha's diary. It serves as a book of memories that she reads to herself hoping that her sister will return before she has gotten to the end. Doretha relives her life portraying the people that have been close to her, realizing that she has found the strength to be herself from these people.

There are many wonderful social implications from this book which enhance a study of the urban African American culture. The history of black freed slaves, with roots in North Carolina, migrating north is one example. A community of urban blacks searching for, holding on to, and celebrating their culture and heritage through dance, language, and oral traditions is another cultural strength looked at in this book and experienced by the communities of our cities.

Reading the Literature

Building Background

Students write in journals about the people in their families. Included are family members, the places the children have lived, the things that they remember about their earlier years, and the feelings that go with these memories.

Vocabulary

Included here are a list of key words drawn from each chapter. The knowledge of them will increase the reading comprehension skills of the reader as well as enhance the meaning of the story. crumble (p. 4)--- tremble(p.12)---slumped(p.17)---hideous(p.42)---flute(p.50)

geometric(p.52)---gestures(p.54)---jive(p.65)---crochet(p.67)

Guided Reading

Previewing the book as a preparation activity to assist in reading comprehension can be accomplished very nicely for this selection by having the children look at the cover and pictures inside. Have the children write in their journals predictions about each chapter by using the chapter titles as a guide. Have the children share their predictions orally in a whole class discussion. These predictions should be posted on large chart paper for reference while reading the book.

Individual guided reading of this book allows the reader to focus and reflect on each part of the story without the distraction of oral discussions, which are a part of the paired reading strategy. Each chapter in Doretha's young life brings with it insight into the feelings and lives of the reader as well as the characters of the story. Chapter by chapter the reader can explore and record the following discoveries.

Chapter1 : Explore the feeling of longing to breathe, with ones whole body, new air.

Chapter 2: Explore the joy of being given a gift by your father of an old looseleaf notebook that was special to him.

Chapter3: Explore the scared, lonely, sad feeling of watching your father die in front of your eyes while you are enjoying a family reunion .

Chapter4: Explore the missing that happens when you see people you love suffering and you can't help them.

Chapter5: Explore the feeling of pride, prejudice, and slavery.

Chapter6: Explore the frustration of being embarrassed in school.

Chapter7: Explore the emotions that go with losing a friend and holding on to a prized possession that he has given you to remember him by.

Chapter8: Explore the deep hurt one feels watching one they love being hurt by someone.

Chapter 9: Explore finding emotional security in other people of your culture.

Chapter10: Explore the emotional highs and lows of loving someone while you watch them destroy themselves.

Chapter11: Explore discovering that you are strong enough to be yourself!

Responding to the Literature

Children respond to the story while learning Venn diagramming. An important third grade skill of comparing and contrasting can be taught in the context of this story. The students take their journal entries, written before they read the story, which recorded their own memories, families, and emotions and compare them to the emotions, memories, and families of Doretha. A Venn diagram showing differences and similarities is created using their own journals and the story information.

Venn Diagram: This diagram consists of two overlapping circles. The outer parts of the circles are used to indicate differences (or contrasts) and the overlapping parts are used to show similarities (or comparisons).

Integrated Curriculum

Social Studies

*******A project involving African Adornment*******

Paper Kufi

African Adornment

To show pride in their heritage young Africans and African Americans wear this round hat.

Some are made of kente cloth (a material made in Ghana).

Objective: For children to create a piece of the African clothing they read about in the book, *Sister* by Eloise Greenfield.

Materials:

Dark colored construction paper strip 24" by 2".
Six strips of different colored construction paper 12" by 1".

Procedure:

Fit headband tightly around head and staple.
arrange six strips of colored paper in a wheel over lapping in center.
staple.
staple outer edges of wheel to headband.

Assessment: Children will display their hats in the classroom as part of their multicultural reading through literature experience.

Yang The Youngest and His Terrible Ear

by Lensey Namioka

Social Studies Focus
China
Chinese-American
Seattle, Washington
Violin and other stringed instruments
Diversity

About the book

This is a wonderful book of Chinese cultural values and the difficulty with which they are assimilated into the American culture. This is a touching story of old world values vs. current American values. A story of a family who immigrates to the United States from China. The father, an acclaimed musician in China, finds it difficult to make a living in Seattle.

The children are all gifted musicians except the youngest child who finds himself better at baseball than the violin. His family doesn't understand him. They think he just isn't trying! An added twist finds Yang, fourth brother, with an American friend who loves to play the violin but whose father thinks music is for sissies and wants his son to play baseball.

This is a very wonderful story for teaching about the unique gifts of each individual and how we need to celebrate them. This book is great for introducing the concept of children from different cultures becoming friends and actually teaching their parents about diversity.

Reading the Literature

Building background

Using several resource books listed here, or similar selections, children go on a fact finding mission about the Chinese culture, country of China, and state of Washington. This is an opportunity for children to gain an understanding of the freedoms they have here in the United States that the people of China do not share.

Three books, *The Children of China* by Matti A. Pitkanen, *A Family in Taiwan* by Ling Yu, and *I Remember China* by Anita Ganeri talk specifically about children of China. Here the children can gain an understanding of the Chinese culture through the eyes of children like themselves.

Two books, *China* by David Flint (On the Map series), and *China Old Ways Meet New* by Deborah Kent help children learn about China and the Chinese culture.

The book *Washington* by Dennis Brindell Fradin and Judith Bloom Fradin, is a study of the state of Washington. This helps the children understand the setting of the story, giving information about a state they have had little opportunity to learn about.

The children's discoveries should be compiled into a whole class book and left available for reference as the reading of *Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear* takes place.

Vocabulary

With this book a glossary of words should be created by the class as the reading unfolds. A picture representing China or the Chinese culture should be placed on the bulletin board. As the children come across words they don't know the meaning of, or are Chinese and unfamiliar to them, or words that just interest them, they should create shape cards (perhaps star shape) and place them on or around the picture creating a reference for creative writing assignments later. The definition or an explanation of meaning needs to be included with the word or phrase.

Guided Reading

Paired reading of this book gives opportunities for cooperative creating of glossary words (above) and general discussion after each chapter is read. It also provides for the original background building(above) to become a

cooperative effort.

Responding to the Literature

Children respond to the reading while learn parts of story through story mapping.

Creation of a story map using a graphic organizer containing Beginning (setting, characters, problem), Middle (Events), Ending(solution and reaction) of the story.

Integrated Curriculum

Social Studies

*****A project involving Chinese writing*****

Chinese Character Stories.

Objective:

Children will gain an understanding of the Chinese written language.
Children will write using several Chinese characters.

Materials:

A copy of Chinese characters (may be found in *China, On The Map*, by David Flint)
black pens and, white paper.

Procedure: Children will practice drawing the various characters using their paper and pens. When they feel comfortable children will write a story using the Chinese characters learned. They can illustrate their stories and create a class book for display.

Assessment: The class book created will become part of their classroom display on their multicultural reading experience.

Toughboy & Sister

by Kirkpatrick Hill

Social Studies Focus
Alaska
Inuit Culture

About the book

This book is about two children who are left alone at their isolated fishing camp on the Yukon River away from their Alaskan village. This is a story of survival and courage. It gives a very clear picture of the Inuit culture and way of life. It contrasts the city life of modern Alaska with the isolated, primitive life of the Alaskan wilderness. It illustrates children who cooperate, learn to be sensitive to and help each other as they use what to use the knowledge they have seen modeled by their parents.

Reading the Literature

Building background

Three excellent children's reference books help the children learn about Alaska and the Inuit culture before they embark on their Alaskan adventure with Toughboy and sister. *The Inuit* by Ruth Thompson gives a clear introduction to the people of Alaska. It has very simple hands on activities for the children to do to help their understanding. *Arctic Hunter* by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith is about a boy who not only lives a contemporary life full of pizza, and hamburgers but also who participates in the old rituals of his Inupiat culture. It parallels very closely the seasonal transition from the modern city life to the isolated summer life of the characters in the fiction story. *The Sea to Shining Sea* series has a great book on Alaska. *Alaska* by Dennis Brindell Fradin helps the students gain an understanding of the largest state in the United States,

Through reading and gathering information from the three resource books above the children create a mural of Alaska. By dividing the area into two halves the children can create contrasting city and isolated tundra fishing camps. The animals, birds, buildings, background etc. should be based on their research. It will be a focus for visualizing the fiction story they involve themselves in reading.

Vocabulary

Have children create a list of words that describe, or create pictures with words, as they experience them in the story. Upon completion of the reading of the story children will do a creative writing activity where they will write a letter to their mother describing their adventure in Alaska as they travel with Toughboy and Sister. They are to use the list of words they created in their letters. Children may also create imaginary diaries instead of letters as another option.

Guided Reading

Children read independently this book. Whole group reflection lead by the teacher should follow each chapter. Some questions to consider are listed below.

Chapter1: How did Toughboy and Sister react to the idea of being split up after their mother died?

Chapter2: Discuss the people of the Alaskan village and their role with the children after the mother died. How does this compare to what might happen if you were left without your mother?

Chapter3 and 4: Discuss the trip to the camp. Talk about the feelings of the children during the trip and when they stopped to visit the Danov's camp.

Chapter5 and 6: Discuss the children's feelings when they got to camp and started to set up for the summer as well as father's emotions and sudden departure to the village.

Chapter 7 and 8: Discuss the fears of the children. What was wrong with father? How did the children react?

Chapters 9 through 22: Discuss in detail the way that the children slowly learn to copy the learned ways of their parents in order to survive after the father dies. Discuss the feelings and roles that the children take on to create the needed cooperative effort.

Chapter23: Talk about the feelings of Natasha when she comes to the camp to find out why they didn't return to the village in the fall. Talk about the children's fate and how they react to it.

Responding to the Literature

The journal or letter writing listed above in the vocabulary section incorporates a response to the story as well as a personal narrative creative writing lesson.

Integrated Curriculum

Social Studies

*****A project of Inuit Communities.*****

Homes: both past and present

Objective: Children will research, gather information, and build homes of the Inuit people. Examples of homes include: sod houses, wooden houses on stilts, and snowhouses.

Procedure: Children work in cooperative groups to research through the library and computer, the various types of homes and communities that the Inuit people live in. Children will choose one type of house and build it with materials available in the classroom. These homes will be accompanied by a brief explanation and description written on large index cards. Children will draw backgrounds and land surfaces to complete the display of their homes.

Assessment: The finished project and accompanied index card booklets which will be added to the created multicultural environment of the classroom.

Meet Josefina

and

Josefina Learns A Lesson

(Book one and two)

Part of the American Girl Collection

by Valerie Tripp

Social Studies Focus

Mexico

New Mexico

History of New Mexico 1800s

About the books

These two books, when read in sequence, give an excellent elementary account of life in the area that today is the state of New Mexico. These fictional stories transport the children into a time and place that becomes very real for them through the daily activities, feelings, and adventures of Josefina a young Mexican girl and her sisters.

These books give children an opportunity to realize that there are life situations which are as real for them today as they were for families that lived long ago. Josefina and her two sisters have lost their mother. They live with their father and are closely tied to their extended families. Josefina and her sisters must do the chores that were the mother's responsibility before she died. Like Toughboy and sister these girls have to put away their childhood games to help run the rancho.

These books are full of rich descriptions of crafts and activities which are a part of the Mexican, Spanish heritage. Children learn about weaving, spinning, cultural dances, and foods.

Reading the Literature

Building background

Listed here are a collection of resource books to be used by the children as they prepare to read the stories.

New Mexico , by Judith Bloom Fradin and Dennis Brindell Fradin

Postcards from Mexico , by Helen Arnold

Where We Live Mexico , by Donna Bailey

Through the Eyes of Children ,Children of Mexico , by Connie Bickman

On The Map, Mexico , by David Flint

A New True Book, Mexico , by Karen Jacobsen

Exploring Cultures of the World, Mexico , by Deborah Kent

A Family in Mexico , by Tom Moran

A study of Mexico and New Mexico prior to the reading of the stories will make the reading more meaningful. Dividing the class into eight groups, one for each resource book, gives the children an opportunity to read and respond to the nonfiction books in ways that they are comfortable with. Each group reads the book then creates their own way of sharing its contents with the class. Some children may create group books, others charts and collages. Oral reports are given using criteria set up by the teacher. The group generated displays decorate a corner of the classroom to be referred to as the children read their novels.

Vocabulary

There is a glossary of words in each book which is very comprehensive. A creative writing activity using these words helps the children gain understanding in meaning and context usage. This activity should be done after the reading of the stories as a responding to literature activity. A writing prompt might include: The family that

lives next door to you is from Mexico. They have a child your age who you become his or her best friend. They invite you to go with them to visit their grandparents. Write a letter home to your family telling of your trip and the things that that you do and see while there.

Guided reading

An independent reading of these books is recommended.

Discuss the similarities and differences in Josefina and her family and Toughboy and his family after the death of their mothers. Talk about the children's changing roles and the feelings of their fathers.

Discuss the cultural activities that you read about in the novels and also found in the resource books.

Be sure to discuss roles of extended families in the stories and whether they are similar to the roles that the students' extended families play in their lives.

Sibling relationships are a large part of this story as well as in Toughboy and Sister. Do the children have similar relationships? What are some similar personality traits that you recognize to be the same as your brothers or sisters?

Responding to the Literature

(see writing activity in vocabulary section)

Integrated Curriculum

Social Studies

***** A project on weaving*******

Weaving

Objective:

Children will gain an understanding of the craft of weaving, as illustrated in the book *Josefina Learns a Lesson* .

Procedure: The children will go on a field trip to a location where weaving is demonstrated or illustrated as a craft. (examples of such trips include Peabody Museum, Sturbridge Village, Historical Society).

Children will use cardboard frames and yarn to weave their own mats. Cardboard frames should be square frames with slits cut around the edges at equal distances around the perimeter of the square or rectangle. The yarn wraps around the frame horizontally in rows then woven vertically in and out of the horizontal rows creating a beautiful weaving.

Assessment: Is the finished weavings on display in the multicultural environment of the classroom.

Unit Summary

This unit, if used as a complete study, can be expanded and woven into every area of the middle elementary school curriculum. What you have in hand with these book studies are complete lessons that require very little extra development. The personal touch comes with the modifications for individual needs and teaching styles. Using these studies to create math and science lessons will turn your whole classroom into a spectacular multicultural learning experience.

Parent involvement Activity: If this unit has been used as a complete study with expansion activities, a parent celebration with refreshments from the different cultures studied, displays of the children's work, music, costumes, skits, author's chair etc. may culminate and bring closure to the exploration while involving parents in the learning of their children.

Primary Children's Fiction Literature

George, Jean Craighead. *Julie of The Wolves*. New York: HarpersCollins Publishers, 1972.

This is the story of a young Eskimo girl which captures Eskimo life while comparing it to that of the whites, old vs. new.

Greenfield, Eloise. *Sister*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1974.

Celebrates life, both the hard times and the good. A story of an African American, inner-city, single parent, family struggling to get on with life after the sudden death of the father. It is the story of the youngest sister discovering who she is.

Hill, Kirkpatrick. *Toughboy & Sister*. New York: Penguin Books. 1990.

A story of modern Inuit life in the Yukon. It explains the ways of the Inuit culture, while telling a story of sibling survival in the wilderness.

Namioka, Lensey. *Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Co. 1992.

The story of a boy who moves from China to Seattle. It teaches Chinese cultural awareness while showing the difficulties of integrating Chinese and American values.

Tripp, Valerie. *Meet Josefina and Josefina Learns a Lesson*. Middleton, Wisconsin: Pleasant Company. 1997.

Two books in the American Girls Collection which tell stories of American girls who lived long ago. These two stories are about growing up in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1824.

Walter, Mildred Pitts. *Justin and the Best Biscuits In The World*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1986.

A story about a young black boy living in a family of all women and his relationship with his grandfather, who lives on a ranch in Missouri. Gives historical information the migration of blacks after the reconstruction and black cowboys.

Yap, Laurence. *Later, Gator*. New York: Hyperion Books. 1995

A story of a Chinese American boy. Good resource for Chinese culture introduction.

Children's Non Fiction Reference

Arnold, Helen. PostCards from Mexico. New York: Raintree Steck-Vaughn Co. 1996.

What can you see and do when you visit Mexico?

Bailey, Donna. Where We Live Mexico. New York: Raintree Steck-Vaughn Co.1992.

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