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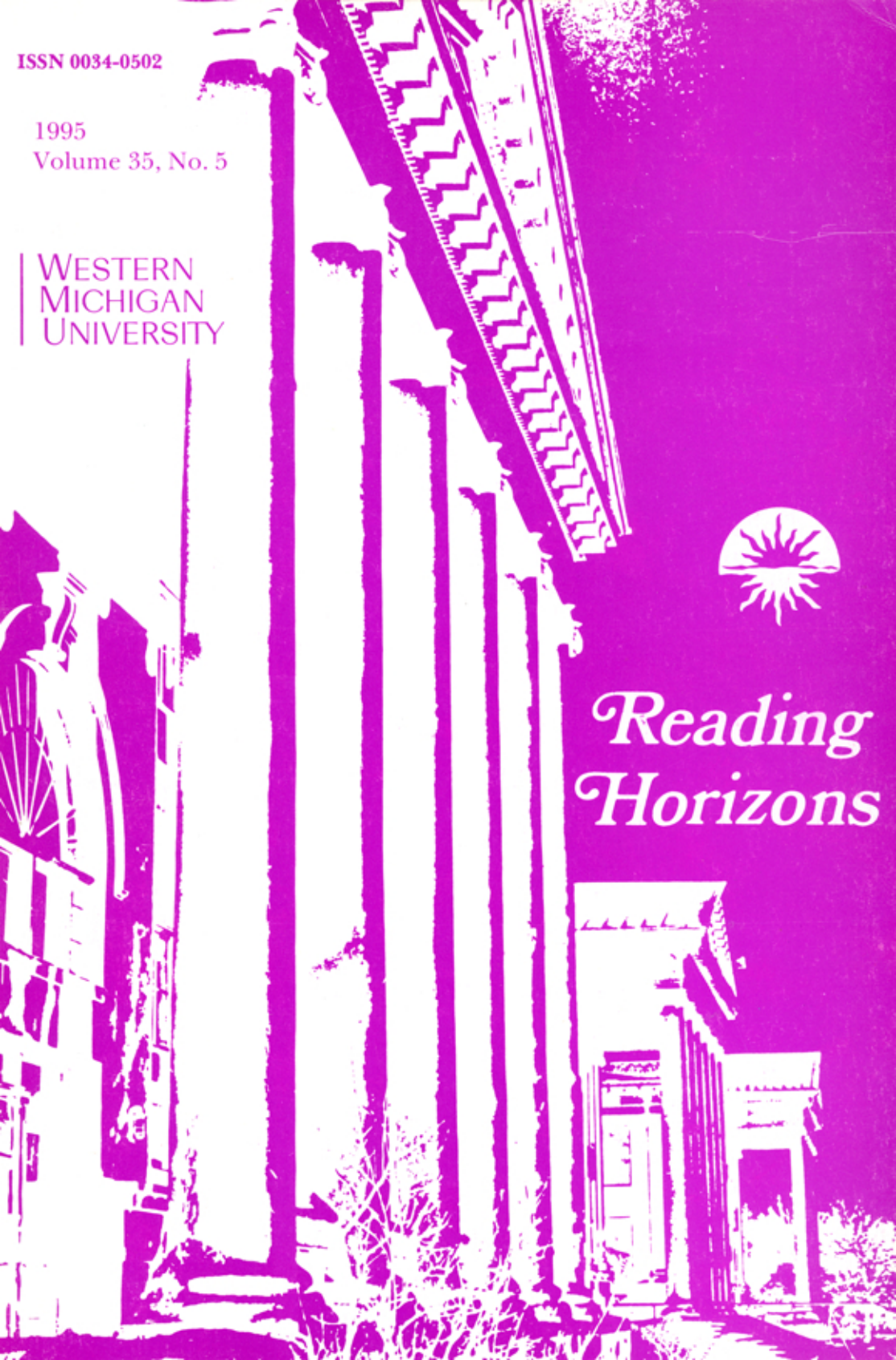
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# *Reading Horizons*







## **READING HORIZONS**

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# First Things First

## A Foreword to the Themed Issue on Multicultural Education in the Language Arts

David Dynak

During the past year, a colleague and I were asked to develop and mentor a series of workshops for administrators of a school district concerned with public perceptions of a lack of sensitivity to multicultural issues. One of the hypotheses that we returned to regularly was that cultural stereotypes derive from a lack of intimacy; when we open ourselves in the attempt to experience as *others* experience, stereotypes lose their objectifying power. Over the course of those workshops, all administrators (from superintendent to building-level assistant principals) demonstrated an incredible willingness to take some significant risks — to share personal insights and values with each other, to open themselves to peer-critique, to grapple with troubling aspects of the images and discourse that emerged at several points.

One of the more powerful sessions included a deceptively simple perception exercise. Twelve of the 40 administrators — mirroring the roughly 30% non-white and Hispanic population projected as currently attending K-12 public schools in the United States (The College Board, 1991) — were asked to go into the hallway and close the door behind them. Those of us that remained in the room discussed what we were to notice first when the 12 rejoined us. We decided that we would notice their noses. Our tasks were to look first at

their noses, to engage them in conversation, and to regularly return to their noses as focal points while conversations continued. When the 12 re-entered, we played *the encounter* with enthusiasm for awhile, until gradually, the tensions slowed the conversations into silence. We then stopped the game and debriefed, with individuals sharing their sense of what had happened.

"I felt like people were looking right through the back of my head," commented one administrator.

"I felt strange, almost invisible," stated another.

"I didn't know *what* was going on, but whatever it was, I didn't want it to continue."

From those of us who had been noticing noses came qualitatively different comments.

"At first, I thought it was funny, and so I kept looking at their noses. I'd sort of shift over to their sides so I could get a profile look. But the more I was with them, the less we had to say to each other. Until we were kind of paralyzed."

"I found that the longer we played this game, the more I looked at their noses."

As a group, we came to the consensus that what we see *first* (be it noses, or race, or ethnicity, or gender, or ascriptive characteristics often associated with socioeconomic status) has a tremendous impact on what we see second. Clearly, the game was only a metaphor, but it helped us feel, see, and talk about many key problems inherent in questioning, conceptualizing, and evaluating multicultural programs and practices in schools. To facilitate discussion, we used Banks's (1993)



typology. That is, did our thinking about programs and practices feature discrete curricular adjustments in order to highlight *contributions* of diverse peoples to mainstream culture (e.g., stories of heroes and heroines, culturally specific holidays, foods, etc.)? Were we envisioning programmatic initiatives that would *add* culturally diverse content, themes and perspectives to curriculum without changing its basic structure? Were we attempting to grapple with ways of *transforming* programs and practices in order to provide learners with a series of multicultural lenses through which concepts, issues, events, and themes could be contextualized and therefore understood more richly? Were we considering culturally sensitive programs and policies as tied inextricably to *social action* and social change? And, like Banks, did we perceive this four-tiered typology (contributions approach, additive approach, transformative approach, and action approach) as inherently hierarchical, with increasing value attached to higher levels?

Because they carried along so many personal beliefs and accepted district practices, these were difficult questions for us to raise, let alone attempt to answer with finality. But, district committees with wide-ranging membership *have* been formed. The dialogue *has* continued. And, we *are* still exploring.

It is our hope that this issue of *Reading Horizons* will help readers navigate some of the tricky currents that we continue to confront as educators of an increasingly diverse population of learners (The College Board, 1991), and as teacher educators concerned with how issues of multiculturalism are treated in teacher education programs. The articles included in this issue are meant to be understood not as examples of best practice, but rather, as examples of how these issues are being addressed by teacher educators and practitioners.

Collectively, these articles focus on the nature of content, tasks, and contexts for making multicultural issues a purposeful part of schooling.

In their bibliographic essay, Young, Campbell, and Oda begin by offering a rationale for making literature from diverse cultures an integral component of literacy instruction. They argue that, in reading the stories of characters from diverse cultures, learners develop a respect for cultural diversity as well as construct multidimensional understandings of human commonalities. Their essay is intended to help practitioners and teacher educators locate multicultural resources appropriate for classroom use, incorporate biographical information on non-mainstream authors and illustrators in classroom activities, and identify authors whose works could provide openings into the issues and canons of multicultural education.

Andersons' research explores the role played by cultural membership in shaping parents' attitudes toward teaching, learning, and literacy instruction. His study suggests that cultural membership is a crucial variable to examine — particularly how literacy practices at school are mediated by parents' attitudes and values toward those practices. Further, Anderson implies that communicating dimensions of literacy programs to parents may be very difficult given the ways in which cultural membership impacts parents' schemata.

In her essay, Stewart discusses how using African American literature about family units could enhance social studies content. She argues that such an approach would increase all learners' understanding of African American culture, while enabling African American learners to find themselves in the texts, thus helping them develop self-esteem,

and deepen their sense of history, social issues, and cultural customs.

Newell details how storytelling could function as a rich, multicultural pedagogy. She explores how storytelling can be grounded in the oral traditions of African and East Indian cultures. Further, she locates a series of skills that emerge from storytelling activities, wherein learners develop practical understandings of narrative structure, main ideas, sequencing of events, a holistic sense of storyline, poise and fluency, increased vocabulary, and the ability to use language to evoke time, place, and image.

Johnson uses his experiences as a "less able member" of a university concert choir as metaphor for how less able readers experience the demands of decoding and processing a complex symbol system. His narrative explores how his journaling during his year in the choir led him to posit literacy activities to help the less able reader grow in skills and confidence. He advocates that teachers begin by realizing how school contexts for literacy learning are often sites for anxiety and deflating evaluation. Johnson translates the positive activities he experienced as a member of the choir into language learning contexts. His list of beneficial activities includes choral reading, heterogeneous grouping (so modeling can occur), regular opportunities for practice, re-visiting familiar pieces to help readers find nuance and develop increased fluency, limiting stress-producing moments, establishing personal connections between readers, creating opportunities for readers to experience texts both part-to-whole and whole-to-part, and structuring literacy events as performances.

Ferguson and Young describe the content and pedagogy of a teacher's three-week unit using *Kwanzaa* to validate the Swahili roots of African American cultural heritage. In their

treatment of the unit, they emphasize that Kwanzaa is a holiday of principles that applies to all students by emphasizing community, purpose, and personal and collective action.

The authors of these articles express a need to expand our pedagogical and theoretical knowledge base by listening, integrating, and sharing -- listening to the voices of scholar educators explore ways of reaching all students; integrating these innovations to provide improved instruction for all students; and sharing these ideas as we develop them further through our own reflective practice.

Rudine Sims Bishop (1994) uses the metaphor of mirrors, windows, and sliding doors in her conception of the multiple richnesses of multicultural literature. However, to experience the new vistas promised by scholars working within multicultural domains, we may need to sort through the things we have come to see first -- to look closely at ourselves and at others in order to open doors, and move through them.

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# Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults: A Rationale and Resources

Terrell A. Young  
Lois Case Campbell  
Linda K. Oda

*"Just because you're different from other people doesn't mean you're not as good or that you have to dislike yourself," [Aunt Waka] said.*

*She looked straight into my eyes, as if she could see all the things that were muddling around inside my brain.*

*"Rinko, don't ever be ashamed of who you are, she said. "Just be the best person you can. Believe in your own worth. And someday I know you'll be able to feel proud of yourself, even the part of you that's different... the part that's Japanese."*

*A Jar of Dreams* by Yoshiko Uchida (1981, p. 125).

Aunt Waka's message to Rinko illustrates two of the many potentials of multicultural children's literature: to enable nonmainstream children to see others who are like them reflected in literature they read and hear, and to help them build self-esteem and feel pride in themselves as part of their culture. Yet the underlying message of multicultural literature is one that benefits *all* children.

Multicultural literature is literature by and about people belonging to the various self-identified ethnic, racial, religious, and regional groups in this country. These groups are referred to as parallel cultures rather than minorities, since the term *minority* is problematic. The following passage from Jacqueline Woodson's *Maizon at Blue Hill* (1992) illustrates some of the negative connotations associated with 'minority.'

*"Are there other black girls there, Mr. Parsons?"*

*Mr. Parsons blinked. "Yes, Maizon. Of course there are other black girls."*

*"Then how come there aren't any in any of these pictures? We must have looked at a hundred of them. And how come there aren't any in this?" I waved the catalog at him.*

*"The catalog needs to be updated, Maizon," he said slowly. "We're working on doing that this year. Blue Hill is actually somewhat behind other schools, in a way." Mr. Parsons cleared his throat before continuing. "While we have small classes with caring teachers and some of the best athletic equipment, we're still working on being more inclusive — bringing in more minorities and students who financially wouldn't be able to have a boarding school experience if it weren't for scholarship..."*

*I listened to him drone on for a while. I hated the word minorities. I mean, who decides who becomes a minority? Personally, I don't consider myself less than anyone. (pp. 2-3)*

Thus, *minority* denotes a value less than that assigned to majority, as if the terms reflect an intrinsic quality rather than a numerical quantity. The term is also problematic in view of sheer numbers; culturally distinct populations exist in dense

pockets across the country often outnumbering the regional mainstream population.

The purpose of this article is two-fold. The first purpose is to present a rationale for making multicultural literature a part of the curriculum for all children. The second purpose is to present teachers with helpful resources they can use to learn about multicultural literature and how to weave it into the fabric of the curriculum.

## Rationale

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 1980 and 1990, the total population grew ten percent. The Asian and Pacific Islander population showed a 108 percent increase, the greatest increase of any nonmainstream group. Latinos increased their numbers by 53 percent, Native Americans, 38 percent and the African American population, 13 percent. This information begs for consideration, since Sanders (1994) warns, "If students in our schools feel alienated in curriculum, instruction, or climate they will suffer. If they are alienated in two of the areas they will fail." Though not a panacea, we see multicultural children's literature as a tool for modifying curriculum, instruction, and climate so *all* students can feel included in the classroom.

Multicultural children's literature is a powerful tool to help students develop an understanding and respect for individuals of all cultures while at the same time gaining an appreciation of their own cultural and literary heritage (Norton, 1990, 1991; Walker-Dalhouse, 1992). An important component of a deeper understanding of these issues is in becoming sensitive to the collective human condition regardless of culture: our needs, emotions, and desires (Cullinan and Galda, 1994). Readers are invited to explore new ways of viewing people of parallel cultures through the eyes of characters like

Cassie Logan in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (Taylor, 1976), David Logan in *The Well* (Taylor, 1995), Maria Isabel Salazar Lopez in *My Name is Maria Isabel* (Ada, 1993), Miata Ramierez in *The Skirt* (Soto, 1992), Henry Yazzie in *The Shadow Brothers* (Cannon, 1990), and Joan Lee in *The Star Fisher* (Yep, 1991).

Finally, our classroom literary selections ought to reflect the diversity outside its walls and provide balance to the predominantly mainstream focus found across the curriculum and grade levels. It is through reading nonstandard selections that students will be able to appreciate the contributions women and members of parallel cultures have made to our country in history, science, mathematics, and the arts.

The remainder of this article is devoted to a discussion of resources for teachers who are in the process of selecting and evaluating multicultural children's books for classroom use. Additional resources will provide teachers with essential background information about various cultures, and appropriate ways of weaving multicultural literature into the curriculum. While most of the resources are current and in print, others can only be found in libraries.

## Resources

We include the following section on resources since many teachers need help in getting to know the literature by and about people of parallel cultures. Dorothy Strickland (1993) suggests teachers need three types of help in making multicultural education a meaningful experience for their students and themselves: 1) help in locating resources, 2) help in learning about people of parallel cultures through involvement in study groups in which they read and discuss adult fiction and nonfiction in addition to literature for children and young adults, and 3) help in establishing literature



based programs. Thus, the resources section is meant to help teachers in addressing these needs. We include the three topics listed above and add a fourth: issues in multicultural literature.

## Locating Resources

Strickland identifies two facets of this need: 1) booklists and 2) information about authors and illustrators. We include a number of books and bibliographies teachers can consult in selecting multicultural literature. To help teachers and students learn more about authors and illustrators, we describe a few of the articles, biographies and autobiographies, and books that are currently available.

## Booklists

Many teachers have been pleased with the available resources to help them select quality multicultural literature. One excellent source is Bishop's *Kaleidoscope* (1994) with annotations of nearly 400 books published in 1990, 1991, and 1992. The books are grouped by theme or genre. Another is Miller-Lachman's (1992) *Our Family, Our Friends, Our World*, which presents annotations of nearly 1000 titles published between 1970 and 1990. *Teaching Multiethnic Literature in Grades K-8* (Harris, 1992c) contains chapters written by members of different cultural perspectives writing about the literature that reflects or concerns their respective groups. *The Multicolored Mirror* (Lindgren, 1991), *Multiethnic Literature for Children and Young Adults* (Kruse & Horning, 1991), and *Many Faces, Many Voices* (Manna & Brodie, 1992) include chapters written by authors and illustrators of color along with annotated listings of recommended culturally authentic books. Oliver (1994) and Rochman (1993) present many titles of multicultural books for young adults.

Journal articles often include bibliographies of books considered culturally accurate. For instance, Junko Yokota's article in *Language Arts* includes an annotated bibliography of more than 30 books meeting the criteria established in her article (1993a). This example is one of the many excellent articles available. Teachers will also want to consult others (e.g., Cox and Galda, 1990; Duff and Tongchinsub, 1990; Gracia, Hadaway, and Beal, 1988; Galda and Cotter, 1992; Galda and Cox, 1991; Galda, Diehl, and Ware, 1993; Norton, 1990).

Many children's literature textbooks include information about multicultural literature. For example, Cullinan and Galda (1994), Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (1993), Norton (1990), and Rudman (1993, 1995) all contain specific chapters dealing with multicultural literature. Huck, Hepler, and Hickman (1993) mention multicultural titles throughout their book as they discuss genres, selection criteria, and classroom applications. Chapters dealing with multicultural literature also appear in many professional volumes (e.g., Allen, 1993; Harris, 1992a).

Teachers can also depend on many journals to provide them with recommendations of current multicultural titles. *Booklinks* for instance, often publishes bibliographies and reviews of multicultural books. Another is *MultiCultural Review* which regularly features reviews and analyses of multicultural literature for children and young adults. Columns highlighting multicultural titles often appear in *The Horn Book*, *Language Arts*, and *The Reading Teacher*.

Other resources are available that present analyses of titles about a single group. For instance, many works are devoted to African-American children's books (Bishop, 1990b; Dickerson, 1990; Harris, 1992b; Johnson, 1991; Kirk, 1993; Mitchell-Powell, 1994; Moll, 1991; Rollock, 1989; Sims, 1982;

Smith, 1994). For evaluations of books about Native Americans, see Slapin and Seale (1988), Caldwell-Wood and Mitten (1992), Giorgis and Mathis (1995), Hirschfelder (1993), MacCann (1992), Noll (1994), and Scott (1995). To learn more about Asian-American books, see Aoki (1992), Cai (1994), Jenkins and Austin (1987), and Yokota (1993b). For information about Latino books, see Barrera, Liguori, and Salas (1992), Nieto (1992), Resendez (1985), and Schon (1989, 1992a, 1993b, 1994c). There are also many sources for recommended books in Spanish (Ada, 1993; Schon, 1992b, 1993a, 1994a, 1994b). See Capan (1994) for listings of books about biracial characters. Frankel (1994) presents an analysis of books about Palestinian-Arabs. Finally, Yokota (1994) notes books representing more than one culture.

### Information about authors and illustrators

Fortunately, more and more resources are becoming available for teachers and students to become acquainted with authors of multicultural children's literature. This section is divided into two areas: 1) resources introducing a number of authors and illustrators, and 2) resources introducing a single author or illustrator. The second category includes articles, biographies and autobiographies.

Teachers are delighted with the recent resources now available for learning about authors and illustrators. Frances Day's *Multicultural Voices in Contemporary Literature* introduces teachers to the lives and works of 39 different authors and illustrators. *Contemporary Spanish-Speaking Writers and Illustrators for Children and Young Adults* (Schon, 1994a), *Conversations with Artists* (Cummings, 1992), and *Book People* (McElmeel, 1992) are also valuable information sources. *Growing Up Latino* (Augenbraum and Stavans, 1993) contains memoirs and short stories by many Latino authors such as Rudolfo Anaya, Gloria Anzaldua, Sandra Cisneros,

Nicholasa Mohr, Gary Soto, and Piri Thomas. Teachers will also wish to consult other excellent resources for learning about authors and illustrators (Kruse and Horning, 1991; Lindgren, 1991; Manna and Brodie, 1992).

Other resources present information about a single author or illustrator. These range from biographies and autobiographies to articles. Autobiographies, such as Nicholasa Mohr's (1994) *Growing Up Inside the Sanctuary of My Imagination*, Laurence Yep's (1991) *The Lost Garden*, or Yoshiko Uchida's (1991) *The Invisible Thread* illustrate how authors craft many of their stories from their own experiences. Bishop's *Presenting Walter Dean Myers* (1991) not only provides information about the author but about several of his books as well. Many articles provide information about a single author or illustrator (Bishop, 1990a, 1990c, 1992a, 1993; Mora, 1994; Soto, 1992; Strickland, 1994; A. Say, 1994, 1995; Y. Say, 1994; Zarnowski, 1991).

### **Learning about other cultures in adult study groups**

Adult book clubs and Teachers as Readers groups provide teachers with opportunities to meet together to discuss and share responses to books they have read. Sometimes parents, teachers, and administrators in these groups talk about children's books; at other times, they discuss young adult, adult, or professional books. Adults participating in such groups learn a great deal about other cultures as they read and discuss realistic fiction and nonfiction written by members of parallel cultures. This learning helps them to challenge stereotypes and over generalizations by seeing variations within groups and similarities among groups. Moreover, this knowledge is essential in selecting authentic multicultural literature for children. Teachers who participate in these groups find themselves relying less and less on expert

recommendations as they choose literature for their classrooms and curricula.

There are many fiction and nonfiction books adult readers can read to learn more about other cultures. A few possible authors of adult books to consider are Paula Gunn Allen, Maya Angelou, Sandra Cisneros, Mary Crow Dog, Richard Erdoes, Toni Morrison, Maxine Hong Kingston, Richard Rodriguez, Amy Tan, and Victor Villasenor. Zimmerman's (1992) annotated bibliography of U.S. Latino literature is a useful tool for selecting additional Latino books to read in these groups.

### **Establishing literature-based programs**

Too often multicultural literature is confined to special dates and holidays. It is not sufficient for teachers to pull out African American literature for Martin Luther King Day and Black History Month or Mexican American literature for use on only Cinco de Mayo. Multicultural literature should be available for students to read on their own, to study together in groups (perhaps literature circles), as information sources to provide balance across the curriculum, and as models for would-be writers (Bishop, 1990b). We are not implying that teachers should no longer read, teach, nor promote mainstream children's literature; we are simply suggesting they make multicultural literature a part of the literary canon and the curricula.

Teachers have been pleased with the many useful resources for making multicultural literature an integral part of their curriculum rather than a token effort. Norton (1990) recommends a five phase model for making this literature a part of the reading program. In this model, students are immersed in one culture's literature. She suggests they begin by broadly reading folktales. For instance, when studying

Mexican-American Literature, students begin (phase 1) by reading folk literature from throughout Latin America before (phase 2) narrowing the study to folk literature from Mexico and the American Southwest. The folk literature is followed with (phase 3) a study of historical autobiographies, biographies, and information books. Students analyze this literature for the values, beliefs, and themes identified in the traditional literature. Next, students (phase 4) read historical fiction to search for the role of traditional literature and to compare it with the historical nonfiction read. Finally, (phase 5) students read contemporary fiction, biography, and poetry. This literature is then analyzed to look for themes and threads across the literature.

Zarillo (1994) suggests teachers include multicultural literature as part of the units they teach. He shares author, genre, thematic, and cross-curricular units that focus on teaching methods that allow every child to be successful, emphasizing cooperative learning, multiple resources (including books written in languages other than English), student experience, and both visual and performing arts. Moreover, suggestions are provided for teachers to use in creating their own units.

Experts have recommended teachers provide children with daily poetry experiences (e.g., Huck, 1989). Teachers are delighted to discover such collections as Joseph Bruchac and Jonathan London's *Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back*, Ashley Bryan's *Sing to the Sun*, Lulu Delacre's *Arroz Con Leche*, Eloise Greenfield's *Nathaniel Talking* and *Under the Sunday Tree*, Walter Dean Myers' *Brown Angels*, Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve's *Dancing Teepees*, Gary Soto's *A Fire in My Hands*, and Joyce Carol Thomas' *Brown Honey in Broomwheat Tea*. Another excellent poetry resource is *A Chorus of Cultures* (Ada, Harris, and Hopkins, 1993). The editors have selected 365 poems, songs, and folktales from a wide

variety of cultures for this wonderful anthology. Organized in a calendar format with a poem for each day, the anthology includes activities and suggestions to "develop literacy and extend concepts across the curriculum." The poems are indexed by themes, by poems appropriate for ESL instruction, author, genre, activity (e.g., drama, games, writing, role playing), and curricular area. We can not imagine an elementary teacher who would not want this anthology!

Multicultural literature has great potential across the curriculum. Rasinski and Padak (1990) "suggest classroom approaches that capitalize on the power of literature to promote intercultural and multicultural appreciation" based on Banks' hierarchical model for integrating ethnic/multicultural content into the curricula. The approaches are contributions which focus on heroes and holidays, the additive where content, concepts, and themes are added to the established curriculum, transformation which changes the curriculum and presents problems, themes, concerns, and concepts from nonmainstream perspectives, and the social action where students "identify social problems and concerns, make decisions, and take actions to help resolve" the identified problems. "Literature can provide the impetus for acting in a positive fashion."

There are many other resources teachers have found valuable for providing their students with meaningful experiences with multicultural children's literature. Many teachers will want to consult the other available resources (e.g., Au, 1993; Crawford, 1993; Diamond and Moore, 1995; Encisco, 1994; Hadaway and Florez, 1990; Milord, 1992; Olson, 1994; Smallwood, 1991; Tiedt and Tiedt, 1994).

## **Issues in multicultural children's literature**

A myriad of issues relating to multicultural children's literature exists for teachers to consider. Many of those issues are beyond the scope of this article. We have chosen to address only the following: defining multicultural literature, selection of multicultural literature, insider/outsider perspective, and potentially sensitive topics.

## **Defining multicultural literature**

According to Cai and Bishop (1994), multicultural literature is a byproduct of the multicultural education movement of the 1960s and "a concept in search of a definition." They present both pedagogical and literary definitions of the concept before presenting three kinds of multicultural literature: world literature, cross-cultural literature, and literature from parallel cultures.

## **Selection of multicultural literature**

This article has suggested many benefits of multicultural literature for students. It must be noted however, these benefits can only be derived from culturally authentic literature. Teachers must be careful in selecting multicultural literature for their students since some books reinforce stereotypes. At this time, teachers and librarians can consult many excellent guidelines for selecting authentic multicultural literature (Bishop, 1992b; Pang, Colvin, Tran, and Barba, 1992; Yokota, 1993a).

Of course, the books should also be good literature. Cultural authenticity is not enough; books must be well written with a good plot, strong characterization, and offer a worthwhile theme (Bishop, 1992).

**Insider/Outsider Perspective.** Many scholars and educators are debating whether authentic multicultural literature



can be written by outsiders (those who write about a cultural group other than their own). We believe that more often than not, cultural emphasis and essence are lost when authors write about another culture through the lens of their own cultures. Cai (1995) presents a clear account of what is required for one to write culturally accurate literature about another group. He presents successful and unsuccessful examples of authors "capturing ethnic experiences" of other cultures. Moreover, he also illustrates how insider authors can sometimes present inaccurate cultural information.

### **Potentially sensitive topics**

Many issues such as racism, prejudice, and violence, presented in multicultural literature can be disturbing to young readers (Harris, 1992a). Rochman (1993), supports this notion as she writes, "good books unsettle us, make us ask questions about what we thought was certain. They don't just reaffirm everything we already know." Such books demand response. Aoki (1992) concurs, noting that along with reading or listening to multicultural literature, it is also important to actively discuss the values that underlie the literature. At other times, it may be helpful to include role playing and taking different characters' points-of-view (Bello, 1992).

### **Conclusion**

More and more teachers are becoming more intentional about teaching, sharing, and including all types of literature in their classrooms and curricula. If teachers do not ensure that their students have ongoing access to literature that portrays characters from diverse cultural groups, they are depriving them of one of the most important ways of learning how people are more alike than different. At the same time, however, this kind of literature can help them to understand the way culture affects the uniqueness of individuals.

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# Listening to Parents' Voices: Cross Cultural Perceptions of Learning to Read and to Write

Jim Anderson

Traditionally, educators have been generous in dispensing advice to parents about how they can help their children learn to read and write when they enter school (e.g., Mergentime, 1963; Vukelich, 1984). However, researchers in emergent literacy (Clay, 1966) have found that many young children enter school already possessing considerable literacy knowledge. Consequently, there is a burgeoning interest in working with parents to understand the important roles they play in their school aged children's literacy development.

Several perspectives as to parents' roles in young children's literacy development are found in the professional literature. For example, some educators suggest that parents do not "explicitly or systematically" teach literacy (Rasinski, Bruneau and Ambrose, 1990) but instead involve their children in functional literacy activities and in this manner children are socialized into literacy and acquire knowledge and skills. Other educators, however, argue that parents do teach literacy skills in a systematic and direct manner (Burns and Collins, 1987) while still others maintain that parents directly teach literacy but within the context of meaningful and



functional activities such as shared storybook reading (Pellegrini, 1991).

Attempting to understand how parents contribute to their children's literacy development is further complicated by the growing recognition that literacy is a sociocultural phenomenon. That is, the meanings ascribed to literacy, the ways in which literacy is learned and taught and the literacy activities engaged in by different cultural groups are determined by the values and beliefs held by the members of these groups. And whereas in the past considerable attention has focused on how teachers' beliefs affect how they teach literacy (Deford, 1978; Harste, Woodward and Burke, 1984), only recently have researchers begun to investigate parents' perceptions of literacy learning. This research suggests that parents, like teachers, mediate literacy according to the beliefs they hold about literacy learning (Anderson, 1992).

Fitzgerald, Spiegel and Cunningham (1991) investigated relationships between parents' perceptions of emergent literacy and their literacy level. They found that high literate parents held beliefs consistent with an emergent literacy perspective but that low literate parents held more traditional perceptions of literacy learning.

In their study which involved middle class and upper middle class parents whose children attended a kindergarten class which was in transition from a skills based program to one that reflected a whole language orientation, Bruneau, Rasinski, and Ambrose (1989) found that most of the parents were very supportive of the whole language program although some parents preferred the traditional skills based approach and had considerable difficulty with aspects of the whole language program such as invented spelling.

Rasinski, Bruneau and Ambrose (1990) documented the literacy activities which children from a whole language kindergarten class participated in at home. They concluded that parents engaged the children in activities which closely resembled the activities provided by the teacher in the kindergarten classroom.

Anderson (1994a) investigated the perceptions of emergent literacy held by high literate middle class and upper middle class parents of three and four-year-olds. In contrast to the findings of Fitzgerald, Spiegel and Cunningham, he found that while some parents strongly supported an emergent literacy perspective, other parents held more traditional views. And while most parents supported some aspects of emergent literacy (e.g., reading-like behavior), many of them had difficulty accepting aspects such as invented spelling.

So while we are beginning to understand parents' roles in their children's literacy development, the research in this area is still quite limited (Adams, 1991) in that much of the research still reflects what Pellegrini (1991) describes as a "mainstream culture" orientation. Given the increasing diversity of our society, it seems incumbent on educators to find out what parents from outside "the mainstream culture" believe about literacy learning and how these beliefs relate to children's literacy development.

The purpose of this study was to document the perceptions of literacy acquisition held by parents from three different cultural groups.

## Method

The sample for this study comprised ten parents from each of three different cultural groups (Chinese-Canadian, Euro-Canadian and Indo-Canadian) from an urban area of

British Columbia. The Chinese-Canadians and Euro-Canadians worked in white collar occupations while the Indo-Canadians were blue collar workers. The sample was drawn from parents of children attending kindergarten, grade one and grade two in three elementary schools (Schools A, B and C).

**School A.** Approximately 270 students attend this school which is located in a commercial-residential area. English is the second language for more than one third of the students, most of whom come from the ethnically diverse neighborhood surrounding the school. Some of the children come from a nearby housing project where the family incomes are low. However, most of the parents earn good incomes working in the commercial district and in service industry and would be considered lower-middle-class and middle-class. Four of the Euro-Canadian parents and six of the Chinese parents came from this school.

**School B.** This school has a population of approximately 200 students, most of whom come from the immediate working class neighborhood. English is the second language for many of the students since many of the parents are recent immigrants from India and Punjabi is spoken in most homes. Many of the parents from this school occupy low paying service jobs. The ten Indo-Canadian parents came from School B.

**School C.** Most of the 400 students who attend School C come from the middle class and upper middle class neighborhood in which the school is located. Many of the parents are recent immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong and for more than half of the students, English is a second language. The school also has a French Immersion program which attracts students from the immediate neighborhood and from

adjacent, middle class areas. Many of the parents from this school are entrepreneurs and professionals. Four of the Chinese-Canadian parents and six of the Euro-Canadian parents had children attending this school.

While the schools differed in terms of demographics, they also shared many similarities. All three schools provided support for special needs students and for students for whom English is a second language. In each school, students sometimes received individual or small group instruction in the Learning Assistance Center and were supported in the regular classrooms by the Learning Assistance Teachers. The schools each had a school library, classroom libraries, a gymnasium, some computers with educational software and are considered relatively well equipped. The curriculum in each school was guided by the primary program which was developed by the Ministry of Education for the province of British Columbia and which emphasize an integrated approach to the learning/teaching of language arts.

As part of the protocol for conducting research developed by the participating school district, details of the research proposal were sent to all elementary schools within the board's jurisdiction. Three schools, each having fairly large concentrations of students from one or more of the cultural groups identified in the proposal were willing to participate in the study. Letters explaining the nature of the research and requesting parents' participation in the study were then sent to a sample (selected randomly as far as possible) of Chinese-Canadian, Euro-Canadian and Indo-Canadian parents of children in kindergarten through grade two. Some parents expressed reservations about participating in the study despite reassurances about confidentiality and the purposes of the study and consequently there was a slight imbalance in the makeup of the sample: 11 parents of kindergarten children,

10 parents of grade one children and 9 parents of grade two children. It was decided that this amount of imbalance would not adversely affect the study.

All parents were interviewed in their homes or in the child's school in their first language (English, Mandarin or Punjabi) by trained research assistants who were from the same cultural group as the parents. The parents were asked "What are the five most important things you are doing to help your child learn to read and to write?" An open-ended question was used since it was hypothesized that with this format, parents would identify what they were actually doing to help their children become literate and not be guided by what they thought the researcher wanted them to say. Subsequent to the data collection, each of the interviews was transcribed. The transcriptions were read in their entirety and the responses were then sorted into categories. For example, the responses, "She constantly sees us reading", "He sees us reading a lot" and "He sees siblings reading" were categorized as *Child sees parent or significant others reading*. For further analysis, the items were grouped into themes according to a classification scheme developed by Anderson (in press). The five themes are: 1) participating in activities/events; 2) teaching literacy skills; 3) valuing, demonstrating and encouraging literacy; 4) knowledge development, and 5) other responses (outside the domain of literacy). These were independently sorted by an expert in early childhood education. A reliability of 95% was achieved.

## Results

In this section, the overall results of all three groups are reported. Then similarities and differences among the three groups are highlighted.

**Overall results.** Because ten parents in each cultural group were asked to identify five things they were doing to help their children learn to read and write, a total of fifty responses for each group was anticipated. However, in each group some parents could name fewer than five items and for example, two of the Indo-Canadian parents each provided only one response; thus there is a discrepancy between the actual number of responses and the number of responses anticipated. This is not surprising in light of the fact that Anderson (in press) reports similar results with the preschool parents in his study whose children attended a university sponsored child study center and who participated in a regular and well designed parent education program.

As is evident in Table 1, each group identified a wide array of items (Chinese-Canadian and Indo-Canadian parents 16 items, Euro-Canadian parents 19 items). Also, in each group, only one or two items were identified by more than one-half the parents and in many cases only one parent suggested a particular item. Anderson (in press) found similar diversity among the homogeneous group of parents in his study. This finding is also consistent with research in early literacy (Anderson, 1994b; Taylor, 1983) which suggests that children participate in a wide variety of literacy activities at home. Indeed, Dyson (in press) and Schmidt (1995) argue that we must not only recognize and accept the diversity in young children's home literacy experiences, we must also learn how to build on these experiences in school.

**Similarities and differences.** As was described earlier, the second phase of the data analysis involved the sorting of the responses from each cultural group into five themes which were capable of describing the data. Each theme is now discussed in turn.

**Table 1**

***What are the five most important things which you are doing to help your child learn to read and write?***

**Chinese-Canadian Parents**

Teaching child to print and write properly	8
Checking understanding of what child has read	4
Teaching child how to spell correctly	3
Reading to child	2
Having child recite story she has read	2
Making sure child concentrates while reading and writing	2
Teaching child how to write	2
Copying books and writing words	2
Ensuring child pronounces words clearly when reading	1
Sit at desk properly	1
Helping child understand the use of learning to read and write	1
Teaching child to read fast and correctly	1
Making sure child completes homework	1
Correcting errors in grammar	1
Teaching child how to listen	1
Speaking the mother tongue (Mandarin) well	1
Total	33

**Euro-Canadian Parents**

Reading to my child	10
Child sees parents or significant others reading	6
Providing books on a regular basis	3
Encouraging child with reading and writing	3
Going to books to look up information	2
Making sure that reading is seen as pleasurable	2
Pointing to pictures during reading	1
Providing pencils, pens and paper	1
Encouraging my child to use the computer	1
Teaching my child how to spell	1
I started him in early literacy [phonics based] program	1
Child reading to parents	1
Child writes stories which I encourage	1
Teaching pronunciation and phonics	1
My child taught himself	1
Restricting the amount of television viewing	1
Teaching my child the alphabet	1
Showing that reading has practical application	1
The computer helped because it required my child to read	1
Total	39

**Indo-Canadian Parents**

Reading to my child	7
Listening to my child reading/telling stories	3
Teaching my child spelling	3
Teaching my child numbers	2
Answering my child's questions	2
Watching television helps my child [learn English]	2
Bringing books from store for my child	1
Taking my child on outings	1
Correcting pronunciation of difficult words	1
Telling my child the meaning of vocabulary words when child is reading	1
Looking at flyers from the supermarket with child	1
Playing cards with child	1
I bought my child a computer game	1
Helping my child write letters to friends and Grandma in India	1
Telling my child stories	1
Printing lines for child to write on	1
Total	29

## Participating in literacy activities/events

Within this theme are literacy activities and events in which parent and child collaboratively participate. That is, the parent does not assume a didactic stance and directly teach specific skills but acts as a mediator providing the necessary amount of support for the child. A key tenet of an emergent literacy perspective is that through immersion in such literacy activities, children learn important literacy skills and attitudes (Sulzby and Teale, 1991).

*Table 2*  
*Participating in Literacy Activities/Events*

Chinese-Canadian Parents

Reading to my child	
Total	<u>2</u> 2 (6%)

Euro-Canadian Parents

Reading to my child	10
Going to books to look up information	2
Child reading to parents	<u>1</u>
Total	13 (33%)

Indo-Canadian Parents

Reading to my child	7
Listening to my child reading/telling stories	3
Looking at flyers from the supermarket	1
Helping write letters to friends and Grandma in India	1
Telling child stories	<u>1</u>
Total	13 (45%)

As can be seen in Table 2, one third of the responses of the Euro-Canadian parents and nearly one half of the responses of the Indo-Canadian parents fell into this category. That this group of Euro-Canadian parents identified a relatively large number of items in this category was to be expected since it is consistent with the findings of Anderson (in press) and with the "literate socialization" theme which is pervasive in the current literature in emergent literacy. On



the other hand, the amount of support for this conceptualization of literacy learning on the part of the Indo-Canadian parents was unexpected since previous research (Spiegel, Fitzgerald and Cunningham, 1993) with low-literate parents of blue collar occupations, as these Indo-Canadian parents were, indicates that they do not support holistic principles of literacy learning embodied in the items named here but instead, believe in traditional, skills-based approaches. Similarly, that so few items in this category were identified by the high literate Chinese-Canadian parents is inconsistent with the findings of Fitzgerald, Spiegel and Cunningham (1991) who concluded that high literate parents support an emergent literacy orientation.

All ten of the Euro-Canadian parents identified "Reading to my child" as a factor in helping their children become literate, a finding consistent with the results of previous research with parents from similar backgrounds (e.g., Anderson, in press). This was the only item which all members of a particular group identified. Furthermore, this was the initial item which many of the Euro-Canadian parents proffered, perhaps further suggesting the importance they place on reading to their children. The Indo-Canadian parents also placed considerable emphasis on shared reading with seven of the ten parents identifying it as a factor in their children's literacy development. On the other hand, only two of the Chinese-Canadian parents saw shared reading as a factor which facilitated literacy acquisition. So while other researchers (e.g., Fitzgerald, Spiegel and Cunningham, 1991; Bruneau, Rasinski and Ambrose, 1989) suggest that high literate middle class parents have perceptions of literacy learning consistent with an emergent literacy perspective, such was not the case with the high-literate Chinese-Canadian parents here. And whereas shared reading is apparently viewed by some educators as "... the literacy event *par excellence* ..." (Pellegrini, 1991, p. 380), these Chinese-Canadian parents afforded relatively little importance to it.

## Teaching literacy skills

While it is generally acknowledged that parents do mediate important literacy skills within literacy events such as those discussed in the previous category (Sulzby and Teale, 1991), they do so not in a deliberate attempt to teach literacy skills but to support the child's participation in, and understanding of, the literacy events and/or activities. The items within this category, however, reflect a direct instruction or transmission-skills orientation and thus reflect the way that literacy has traditionally been taught in schools (Wells, 1986).

As shown in Table 4, some parents from all three groups identified items within this category. However, nearly 90% of the responses of the Chinese-Canadian parents fell into this category whereas relatively fewer items from other groups fit here. For the Chinese-Canadian parents, a concern with form and with monitoring and correcting performance seemed to predominate, for example, "Teaching child to print and write properly" was the item identified most frequently (eight parents). Similarly, "Checking child's understanding of reading (four parents), "Teaching child how to spell correctly" (three parents), and "Copying books and writing words", (two parents) reflect the concern with form and performance. One of the parents also suggested that by teaching her child to "Sit at desk properly," she was helping her child learn to read and write. And while some educators might question possible relationships between posture and literacy acquisition, proper posture has traditionally been seen as essential for the development of correct printing and handwriting. In fact, the recommended resource book for the Province of British Columbia suggests that teachers "... try to instill the following posture habits," which include "feet kept flat on the floor" and "back and shoulders kept straight." (*Handwriting Resource Book Grades 1-7*, 1981, p. 10).

*Table 3*  
*Teaching Literacy Skills*

<u>Chinese-Canadian Parents</u>	
Teaching child to print and write properly	8
Checking child's understanding of reading	4
Teaching child how to spell correctly	3
Having child recite story read	2
Making sure child concentrates while reading and writing	2
Teaching child how to write	2
Copying books and writing words	2
Ensuring child pronounces words clearly when reading	1
Sit at desk properly	1
Teaching child to read fast and correctly	1
Making sure child completes homework	1
Correcting errors in grammar	1
Teaching child how to listen	1
Total	29 (88%)
<u>Euro-Canadian Parents</u>	
Teaching child how to spell	1
I started my child in early literacy [phonics based] program	1
Teaching pronunciation and phonics	1
Teaching my child the alphabet	1
The computer helped since it required my child to read	1
Total	5 (13%)
<u>Indo-Canadian Parents</u>	
Teaching my child spelling	3
Correcting pronunciation of difficult words	1
Telling my child the meanings of vocabulary words when child reads	1
Printing lines for child to write on	1
Total	6 (21%)

With the Euro-Canadian parents, no trends emerged in this category in that only individual parents identified teaching spelling, phonics and so forth. Whereas the items from the Chinese-Canadian parents suggest an overriding concern with form and performance, these items suggest a concern with teaching basic literacy skills (Adams, 1991). Anderson (in press) also found that teaching these specific skills were identified — albeit infrequently — as ways parents were

contributing to their children's literacy development. Given the limited range of items suggested by the Indo-Canadian parents, it is noteworthy that three of them referred to teaching spelling. Of course, it is impossible to deduce from the available data whether these parents had difficulty accepting the concept of invented spelling. However, Anderson (1994a) and Bruneau, Rasinski and Ambrose (1989) observed that parents who generally supported a holistic perspective of literacy learning had difficulty accepting invented spelling.

### **Valuing, demonstrating and encouraging literacy**

While the cognitive dimensions of literacy have traditionally received much attention (e.g., Dagostino and Carifio, 1994), the sociocultural aspects of literacy have recently gained much prominence in the literature (e.g., Schmidt, 1995). For example, researchers posit that immersion in a sociocultural context in which literacy is valued and where literacy is a functional part of daily life contributes to children's literacy development (Sulzby and Teale, 1991). This perspective is exemplified by Smith's (1988) influential metaphor in which he likens literacy learning to joining a social club.

Again, there were marked differences among the groups in terms of this category of responses (Table 4). While nearly two thirds of all of the items produced by Euro-Canadian parents were in this category (Table 4), each of the other groups produced relatively few responses which fit here. Anderson (in press) also found that the Euro-Canadian parents of preschoolers in his study believed in the importance of valuing, modeling and demonstrating literacy, and approximately the same percentage of them suggested that seeing a parent or significant other reading contributed to their children's literacy development. An original premise was that the open ended question which guided this study would prompt

parents to identify that which they were currently doing to help their children to become literate. If this premise holds, it is obvious that the Euro-Canadian parents put much more stock in the importance of providing role models and encouraging children than do the parents from the other groups. Of course, parents in each of the other groups were probably providing role models and encouraging their children in terms of literacy learning as well. Furthermore, the fact that the Chinese-Canadian parents and Indo-Canadian parents appeared not to recognize the socio-cultural dimensions of literacy may have no effect on their children's literacy development. One wonders, however, how these parents view current pedagogical practices such as literacy circles and dialogue journals which are based on social-constructivist views of learning (Rogoff, 1990).

**Table 4**  
***Valuing, Demonstrating and Encouraging Literacy***

Chinese-Canadian Parents

Helping child understand the uses of learning to read and write	
Total	$\frac{1}{1}$ (3%)

Euro-Canadian Parents

Child sees parents or significant others reading	6
Encouraging child with reading and writing	3
Providing books on a regular basis	3
Making sure that reading is seen as pleasurable	2
Providing pencils, pen and paper	1
Encouraging my child to use the computer	1
Child writes stories which I encourage	1
Showing that reading has practical application	$\frac{1}{18}$
Total	18 (62%)

Indo-Canadian Parents

Bringing books from store for child	1
I bought child a computer game	$\frac{1}{2}$
Total	2 (7%)

## Knowledge development

Traditionally, literacy curricula have had a skills orientation and the more mechanical aspects of reading and writing (e.g., letter recognition, phonics, handwriting and printing) have received heavy emphasis. However, there is increasing recognition that reading and writing are complex processes which entail the use of various linguistic and knowledge resources (e.g., Snow, 1991). In other words, as Freire and Macedo (1987) cogently put it, literacy entails reading the world as well as reading the word.

*Table 5*  
*Knowledge Development*

<u>Chinese-Canadian Parents</u>	
Speaking the mother tongue well	
Total	$\frac{1}{1}$ (3%)
<u>Euro-Canadian Parents</u>	
Pointing to pictures during reading	
Total	$\frac{1}{1}$ (2.6%)
<u>Indo-Canadian Parents</u>	
Answering my child's questions	2
Watching television helps child [learn English]	2
Taking my child on outings	$\frac{1}{5}$
Total	5 (17%)

As shown in Table 5, neither the Chinese-Canadian parents nor the Euro-Canadian parents appeared to afford importance to the development of general knowledge in terms of their children's literacy development. On the other hand, the Indo-Canadian parents identified several factors in this category. Interestingly, two of the Indo-Canadian parents identified watching television — which some parents see as inhibiting literacy development — as a factor contributing to their children's literacy development. However, both parents elaborated that they saw television as a means for helping their children learn English which was the language of instruction at school. Anderson (in press) found that the parents of

preschoolers placed considerable emphasis on the role of general knowledge in their children's literacy development. Whether parents' concern with general knowledge development decreases after children commence school remains a matter for speculation.

## Other responses

*Table 6*  
*Other Responses*

<u>Euro-Canadian Parents</u>	
My child taught himself	1
Restricting the amount of television viewing	$\frac{1}{2}$
Total	2 (5%)
<u>Indo-Canadian Parents</u>	
Teaching him numbers	2
Playing cards with him	$\frac{1}{3}$
Total	3 (10%)

Some of the responses appeared to be outside the domain of literacy and hence were assigned to this category (Table 6). For example, it is difficult to envision how "playing cards" facilitates literacy learning; instead this activity seems more applicable to the development of numeracy which was identified by two of the Indo-Canadian parents and also assigned to this category.

## Conclusion

Given the relatively small sample size and the lack of true randomization in sample selection, the results of this study need to be interpreted cautiously. However, certain trends emerged from the data and these may be summarized as follows: 1) The Euro-Canadian (middle class — upper middle class) and Indo-Canadian (working class) parents appeared to afford considerable importance to the social aspects of literacy whereas the Chinese-Canadian (middle class —

upper middle class) parents did not; 2) Most of the responses of the Chinese-Canadian parents were categorized as direct teaching of literacy skills and attitudes suggesting that this group held quite traditional perceptions of literacy learning. While such direct teaching was identified by some parents in the other two groups, it received considerably less attention; 3) The Euro-Canadian parents appeared to place much value on valuing, demonstrating and encouraging literacy whereas the other groups did not; 4) While neither of the groups appeared to afford much value to the role of general knowledge development in literacy learning, the Indo-Canadian parents mentioned such factors more frequently than the other groups.

The results of this study are generally consistent with those of Anderson (1994a) who found that while some parents supported an emergent literacy perspective, other parents retained more traditional views of literacy learning. However, the results of this study do not support the conclusion of Fitzgerald, Spiegel and Cunningham (1991) that "low-literacy parents seem to have a bundle-of-skills view of literacy and ... high literacy parents tend to see literacy as cultural transmission" (p. 211). For clearly in the present study, the Chinese-Canadian parents did not present a cultural transmission view of literacy and neither did the Indo-Canadian parents appear to have bought into a "bundle of skills" point of view. Furthermore, the results of the current study are counter to the contention by Fitzgerald, Spiegel and Cunningham (1991) that "ethnicity is not highly related to home literacy practices" (p. 211).

In deconstructing some of the assumptions underlying current early literacy programs, Dyson (in press) points out that an orthodoxy has emerged in that proponents of particular pedagogical stances project the notion that there are "correct" ways of teaching and learning literacy and "incorrect" ways of literacy learning and teaching. That is, despite the evidence that literacy learning and teaching are culturally determined (e.g., Resnick, 1989), proponents of whole language



and emergent literacy " ... imply — or directly state that certain kinds of instructional programs will benefit all children ..." (Dyson, in press, p. 1). Anderson (1992) concluded that there is a relationship between parents' beliefs about literacy learning and the home literacy environment they create, or in other words, "they practice what they preach." If this holds for the parents in this study, one would have to wonder about the degree to which the home literacy experiences of some of the children are in harmony with their literacy experiences at school or the expectations of the school.

Dyson (in press) has clearly shown that children bring expectations of literacy experiences from the home and that these experiences do not always map on to current developmental models of literacy acquisition. The negative consequences which can result from a dissonance between literacy experiences at home and literacy learning at school are brought home poignantly in Schmidt's (1995) accounts of the lived literacy experiences of Peley and Raji, two children from outside the "mainstream" culture attempting to make sense of literacy, and learn to read and write within a kindergarten class where mainstream values and practices predominated. As Dyson (in press) suggests, the differences between cultures in the end may not really matter in terms of children's literacy experiences if educators understand and build on these differences. Dyson argues that we need to enter into dialogue about difference in terms of early childhood literacy. The results of this study suggest that we should.

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# **Integrating African-American Literature in the Elementary Social Studies Classroom**

**Loraine Moses Stewart**

African-Americans are one of the largest minority groups in the United States; therefore it is imperative that literature that features African-Americans as the main characters be in today's classrooms. This literature is not only important for African-American children to see themselves, but for children of other races to see as well. Carlsen (1971) stated " ... young people want to read about people like themselves, with whom they can identify" (p. 208). "If African-American students cannot find themselves and people like them in the books they read and have read to them, they receive a powerful message about how they are undervalued in both school and society" (Bishop, 1990, p. 561).

According to Bishop (1990), less than two percent of the children's books published each year feature African-Americans as major characters. As a result, these few books are often unknown to classroom teachers. Thompson and Meeks (1990) stated that many teachers are "not familiar with children's literature that reflects the country's cultural diversity" (p. 9).

Along with this lack of knowledge there is also a lack of awareness of how useful these books could be as a means of reinforcing basic skills and emphasizing topics such as family life and self-esteem. According to the National Black Child Development Institute (1991), "Children's books that present accurate and realistic images of Black people and our culture are a major vehicle for generating high self-esteem and a positive self-concept in Black children" (p. 5). Experiencing authentic African-American literature is important for all students regardless of their race (Harris, 1991).

This article will focus on picture books that feature African-Americans and ways they can be used in the social studies classroom. Some of the books discussed are not authentic in regard to particular language and life experiences that clearly identify the characters as African-American, but are acceptable because they represent the diversity within African-American culture.

### **African-American picture books**

It is my belief that African-American picture books can be used when addressing many different issues in the social studies classroom. One concept that permeates the first grade curriculum is the family. There are many African-American picture books that address family issues such as a new baby in the family, sibling rivalry, and grandparent relationships.

Many of the picture books that feature African-American families are fictional with a story line that could be appropriate for any race. This does not devalue the books; instead it celebrates the diversity within the African-American culture and supports the fact that all African-Americans do not share the same life experiences.

An example of a book that fits into this category is Eloise Greenfield's *First Pink Light* (1976, 1991). This is a wonderful story of a little boy, Tyree, who tries to stay up all night to surprise his father when he comes home at dawn from taking care of his grandmother. Jan Spivey Gilchrist's beautiful soft illustrations create a calm feeling of love and warmth between Tyree and his mother as they await his father's arrival the next morning. This story shows a sense of love and togetherness in an African-American family, in spite of their separation from one another. In addition, it contradicts the negative stereotypes that are often associated with African-American men. Not only is Tyree's father taking care of his immediate family but he has also gone on a trip to take care of his ill mother.

Faith Ringgold's books, *Tar Beach* (1991) and *Dinner at Aunt Connie's House* (1993), focus on family life also. They are more authentic to African-American culture than Greenfield's *First Pink Light* (1991). Both books emphasize families coming together for a time of fellowship and enjoyment. In addition, both books combine fantasy and realistic fiction; therefore it would be important for the teacher to preface the stories with discussions about real and make believe. For example, in *Tar Beach* (Ringgold, 1991), Cassie imagines flying over the city and gaining ownership of everything she wants as she passes over it. She also imagines that the rooftop her family is gathered on for an evening of cards and fellowship is a tar beach.

In *Dinner at Aunt Connie's House* (Ringgold, 1993), Cassie and her cousin Lonnie find talking pictures of African-American women leaders in the attic. When discussing this book, the teacher should help students understand that although pictures do not talk, these are real people and true stories. This would be a good time to give nonfictional accounts

of the women's lives through discussions, individual library reports by upper elementary students or reading biographies.

This book allows for the integration of art and mathematics also. Art could be integrated by assigning the students one of the twelve female leaders to draw for a class or school African-American Women Art Exhibit. Other more contemporary women leaders could be included such as Maya Angelou, Oprah Winfrey, Toni Morrison, and Carol Moseley Brown. Math concepts could be included by having the students imagine that they are having a real art exhibit to sell their paintings. The students would need to add up the cost of things such as entry fees to the exhibit, number of prints needed, and other costs for the exhibit.

When teaching about families, it is also important for teachers to discuss the members of a family and how there are different types of families. This will help children who do not fit into a traditional nuclear family to be able to validate their family and not feel left out of the activity. Under that umbrella, issues such as a new baby in the family and grandparent relationships are likely to surface. Regarding a new baby, *Peter's Chair* (Keats, 1967), *Everett Anderson's Nine Month Long* (Clifton, 1978), *My Mother Needs Me* (Walters, 1983), and *She Come Bringing Me That Little Baby Girl* (Greenfield, 1974) would be good books to use. Each of them deals with an older sibling struggling with accepting a new baby into the family. Each story ends with the older siblings realizing they love and accept the new addition to the family.

Picture books that discuss African-American customs and traditions can also be very useful in a social studies classroom. *Cornrows* (1979), by Camilee Yarbrough, is a lively book that addresses the traditional African custom of hair-braiding. In addition to discussing the custom and history of

cornrowing, *Cornrows* also presents an array of African-American heroes that could lead to a deeper study of each of the heroes discussed in the story. The teacher could lead students through the same kinds of activities mentioned earlier in reference to Ringgold's *Dinner at Aunt Connie's House* (1993). Furthermore, inviting a student who wears braids to talk to the class about her hairstyle would be another possibility. (I get many questions from white adults about my braids, and I am sure white children have these questions as well.) This would be an opportunity to use African-American literature as a tool to increase ethnic understanding as suggested by Walker-Dalhousie (1992).

Greenfield's *Me and Neesie* (1975) is another book that refers to cornrowing; it would be a good prelude to *Cornrows* (1979). It deals with a little girl's relationship with her imaginary friend Neesie and her family's reaction to her. This is also a good book to use when illustrating the difference between what is real and what is imaginary.

*Tell Me a Story, Mama* (Johnson, 1989) and *Your Dad Was Just Like You* (1993) are two stories that build upon the oral tradition of African-American culture. *Tell Me a Story, Mama* is a story of a little girl asking her mother to tell her a story about when she was a child. Each time the mother tries to tell the story, the little girl takes over and tells the story for her. It is obvious that she has heard the story so many times she knows it by heart. Nevertheless, she still begs for her mother to continue telling it to her. *Your Dad Was Just Like You* (Johnson, 1993), is a story of a little boy who complains to his grandfather about his father scolding him for breaking an item in their home. The little boy is quite surprised when his grandfather tells him stories about his father when he was his age, and how much he is like his father. The story has a beautiful ending because the boy realizes why his father is scolding



him and how much he really loves his father, and his father loves him. Both books reflect warmth, passing of life stories, and families spending quality time together talking, which is a tradition in the African-American culture.

Biographies and family histories are also a part of the elementary social studies curriculum. Books such as *The Patchwork Quilt* (Flournoy, 1985), *Martin Luther King Day* (Lowery, 1987), and *Ragtime Tumpie* (Schroeder, 1989) would be appropriate when addressing these themes. *The Patchwork Quilt* (Flournoy, 1985) explores intergenerational ties and family history. It is a story of a family learning to appreciate its history through finishing a quilt started by their grandmother, who is too ill to complete it. As they look at the completed quilt made from various pieces of clothing each of them had worn during the year, they are able to reflect on the previous year. Elementary students could create their own quilts depicting the history of their family, community, or state, using squares of either cloth or paper.

In addition there are elementary level biographies of such African-American leaders as Langston Hughes, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Scott Joplin, Jesse Jackson, and Mary McLeod Bethune. Students could read and study the lives of these individuals when topics relevant to them are being discussed. For example, Hughes could be included with poetry units; Parks and King with civil rights and social justice units; and Joplin with music units. Some teachers already discuss these African-American leaders, but usually it is only during Black History Month. In order to have a genuine multicultural curriculum, it is imperative that minorities be incorporated into the curriculum throughout the year instead of just designated times of the year.

Homelessness is a topic that can be discussed under the umbrella of community involvement, as part of the second grade curriculum. Guthrie's *A Rose for Abby* (1988) addresses the issue of homelessness by telling how one little girl's concern for a bag lady on her street encouraged her family and neighbors to reach out to the homeless. Slavery is an issue that usually does not enter the social studies curriculum until the fourth or fifth grade. Nevertheless, it is a topic that teachers often feel uncomfortable teaching and they have concerns about how and when to present it. Ringgold's *Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky* (1992), Mendez's *The Black Snowman* (1989), and Johnson's *Now Let Me Fly: The Story of a Slave Family* (1993) are fictional accounts of slave life. Even though they do not go in depth into the struggles of slaves, they depict a general idea that would be appropriate for elementary students. More advanced factual accounts could be shared at a later time.

### **Educational Implications**

This article only presents a few of the many appropriate picture books that feature African-Americans as the main characters and ways they can be included in the social studies curriculum. There are many other books as well as ways of incorporating them into the curriculum. African-American literature has a great deal to offer as an enhancement to the elementary social studies curriculum. It provides many colorful stories that can be infused into the school curriculum and provide meaning and diversity.

Unfortunately many of the books are difficult to locate, I believe it is safe to assume that many teachers do not use them because they are not aware of them or can't find them. I challenge all social studies teachers to become more familiar with the African-American picture books available in their

school and county libraries and include them in their curriculum whenever possible.

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# Sharing Multicultural Literature Through Storytelling

Florence M. Newell

Literature can be used as a means to support children's development in the areas of cognition, language, social mores, creativity, personality, and aesthetics (Glazer, 1986). As the children in public schools today become more culturally and linguistically different, the diversity of literature should be expanded to reflect these differences among learners. Each child brings unique literacy strengths and serves as a resource to help teachers and other students understand one another (Templeton, 1991). Sharing literature from different cultures or literature that includes characters with different cultural or ethnic backgrounds offers a variety of benefits for teachers and students. Using multicultural literature increases cultural awareness, helps children better understand themselves and others, develops awareness of different languages, allows children to identify with the people who created the stories, helps children discover themes and values important to people today, expands knowledge of geography and natural history, develops knowledge of history and social changes, and builds appreciation of literary techniques (Bromley, 1992; Sylvester, 1989).

Using multicultural literature also nurtures the affective and imaginative uses of language that children bring to

school. Children's facility with affective and imaginative use of language can be used to teach about the world and our shared cultures. Stories can be used to teach many subjects, not only reading and language arts, but also social studies, mathematics, science, music and art. Such use will enable children to become familiar with the conventional forms of literature and drama — the two forms of language most closely associated with the affective and imaginative uses of language (Finn, 1993).

One method of sharing multicultural literature is through storytelling. This article describes the benefits of storytelling, activities which foster storytelling, and techniques of storytelling for teachers and students.

Traditionally storytelling is defined as "the oral interpretation of literature and folklore" (Rubin, 1990, p. 94). Based on this definition, all that is needed is the storyteller, the story, a place to tell the story, and a receptive audience. However, some people today combine storytelling with creative drama or use puppets or other props to help them convey their story. Whatever technique of storytelling the storyteller uses, the key is in finding a story that is just right — a story that the storyteller enjoys (Rubin, 1990).

Storytelling is an ancient art that is practiced by millions of amateurs (nearly every mom and dad and five-year-old) and a few professionals (Finn, 1993). Storytelling is the basis of most folklore. Tales, mythology, and epics were developed, spread geographically, and transcended time through oral sharing (Tiedt, 1979).

### **Benefits of storytelling**

According to Finn (1993), the three historic purposes of storytelling are to teach, to entertain, and to transmit culture.

Regardless of the purpose, children benefit from hearing stories. The following is a summary of benefits derived from hearing or telling stories.

Storytelling is entertaining and stimulates children's imaginations (Hoskisson and Tompkins, 1987). It conveys information that will be essential in the development of their understanding of the world in general and literacy in particular (Rubin, 1990). Storytelling promotes understanding of the oral tradition in literature. In many societies, young children have been initiated into their literacy heritage through storytelling. Unfortunately today, few children have such experiences (Norton, 1993). With regard to literacy, storytelling conveys the structure or form of narratives and the forms and rhythms of effective language (Peck, 1989). Storytelling motivates children to read, and can introduce them to the values and literacy tradition of different cultures (Cothem, 1992; Templeton, 1991). It expands their language abilities and helps them internalize the characteristics of stories (Morrow, 1989). Development of vocabulary and of syntactic complexities in oral language is enhanced as children become storytellers (Strickland and Morrow, 1989). As children prepare a story, they practice reading skills and various oral language abilities.

Storytelling extends children's enjoyment of literature and helps them develop poise and linguistic fluency (Tiedt, 1979). Storytelling provides the opportunity to involve children actively in the literacy experience. An adult storyteller can use gestures and action that involve children in the story. Seeing an adult tell a story provides the stimulus for children's storytelling. Seeing a teacher engage in storytelling helps children understand that storytelling is a worthwhile activity, and motivates them to try telling stories themselves (Norton, 1993).

## Activities which foster storytelling

Teachers must first be storytellers themselves (Wendelin, 1991), and invite others into the classroom to share stories — other teachers, librarians, administrators, parents and students. Through observing storytellers, children acquire some of the techniques used in this art (Norton, 1993). This section describes activities using multicultural literature which encourage children to become storytellers. Figure 1 provides guidelines useful for both teachers and students.

As teachers model storytelling, they should introduce children to authentic storytelling traditions. By explaining and demonstrating storytelling traditions like the two listed below, multicultural understandings are enhanced and children may adapt these traditions and use them during their storytelling activities.

The use of story nets is a West African storytelling tradition. Kingsley (1964) reported that minstrels set up story nets with many objects hanging on them in the village. Listeners would select the objects the minstrels would use to tell the story. Also, a net or web is used in many African tales. One example is *A Story, A Story* as retold by Gail Haley (1970). If *A Story, A Story* can't be found, substitute *Spider and the Sky God* (1993) by Deborah M. Newton Chocolate. This tale explains how stories were brought to earth by Ananse, the spider man. Throughout the story, Ananse used his web, trickery, and wit to capture a python, a fairy, and some hornets, and delivers them to the Sky God for payment of all the stories he possessed. In telling this story, a model of Spiderman, a rubber snake, a hornet's nest and a doll can be attached to the storyteller's net. A teacher can begin creating a story net in a corner of the classroom by hanging a fish net and attaching objects which are mentioned in stories.

**Figure 1**  
***Guidelines for Storytelling for Teachers and Students\****

1. Select a story you enjoy that is well written. Choose a story that is appropriate for the age and experience of the audience. Consider the mood you wish to create and the time you have available. Select a story that has a small number of well defined characters. Useful books include: *The Stories Julian Tells* by Ann Cameron (1981); *The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales* told by Virginia Hamilton (1985); *The Tales of Uncle Remus: The Adventures of Brer Rabbit* as told by Julius Lester (1987) and *Reflections of a Black Cowboy* by Robert Miller (1991).
2. Read the story aloud a few times until you are familiar with the characters and the story line. Don't try to memorize the author's exact words. Use your words to tell the story you have painted in your mind.
3. Read the story again to determine if you have remembered the important actions and sequence of events.
4. Tell the story into a tape recorder or note key information on file cards which will become the nucleus of your storyteller's file. Make only brief notes so you don't become dependent upon them.
5. Read the story again. Listen to your audiotape or review your note cards and make adjustments.
6. Tell the story again, using your voice to bring the characters and actions to life. Try adjusting the pitch and volume of your voice to depict the actions of different characters.
7. Tell the story in front of a mirror to practice your posture, eye contact and gestures. When you do use gestures, make exaggerated movements.
8. Practice the beginning of the story one more time. Getting off to a good start will help you relax while you tell the story.
9. Share the story with an audience. Remember to slow down and breathe.
10. Reflect on your storytelling. Evaluate your performance.
11. Select other stories. Build a repertoire of stories.

\* These guidelines, compiled from the work of Bromley, 1992; Norton, 1993; Strickland & Morrow, 1989; Tompkins & Hoskisson, 1991; Rubin, 1990, are useful for both teachers and students as they prepare to be storytellers and develop their storytelling skills.



Throughout the year, as stories are told additional objects can be placed on the story net (Imdieke, 1990). These objects may then be used for telling the original stories or as props to support teachers and students as they create new stories.

According to Pellowski (1990), an East Indian storytelling tradition is to illustrate stories on scrolls. As a response to hearing an Indian tale, *The Blind Men and the Elephant* retold by Lillian Quigley (1959), students can draw pictures of the characters and important events of the story, place them sequentially on a scroll, and use the scroll to support their storytelling. Following this East Indian tradition, students can then travel from village to village (classroom to classroom) and share their stories. Preparing a story scroll provides children with opportunities to demonstrate that they possess a sense of story, can sequence events, and identify main ideas (Imdieke, 1990). (Cloth has been traditionally used; however, fax machine paper or freezer paper which is already on a roll can be used as inexpensive scroll paper).

One of the best ways to encourage students to participate in storytelling is to invite them to perform the story or to act it out. *Peter's Chair* by Ezra Jack Keats (1967) is an example of a story which lends itself to being acted out by students. Through narrating the story, students can perform the actions of the characters as the story is being told.

*When I Was Young in the Mountains*, an Appalachian story by Cynthia Rylant (1982), is an example of a story which can be used to involve students during the storytelling session. The line "When I was young in the mountains," is repeated throughout the story. As the story is being told, the storyteller can step forward to signal when the children are to say the line.

*Ty's One-Man Band* by Mildred Pitts Walter (1980) is a story about a boy named Ty who meets Andro, a one-man band. Andro agrees to perform for Ty and his friends if Ty will supply the instruments — a comb, a washboard, two wooden spoons, and a pail. Near the end of the story Andro comes to town, Ty has gathered the objects, and Andro makes beautiful music using those objects as instruments. At the end of the story Andro invites Ty and his friends to play the instruments. The students in the classroom can take turns making music. The teacher can place additional objects around the room to be played as instruments so more students can participate. It is a great way to conclude a story-telling session because the audience can actually help with the finale.

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# **I Was a Less Able Reader: What Concert Choir Taught Me About Reading Instruction**

**Andrew Johnson**

What does it feel like to be a less able reader — to attempt to decode and process text when everyone around you seems to be much more advanced than yourself? What strategies might be used to help less able readers decode and process text in a symbol-sound system? This study uses participant-observer research methods to elicit answers to these questions. As a graduate student at the University of Minnesota studying literacy education, I needed to find an instance where: a) I was a less able learner, and b) I was involved in the process of decoding in a complex symbol-sound system. There are many similarities between reading words and reading music (Flemming, 1988). Thus, I auditioned for and participated for two quarters in the University of Minnesota concert choir. This experience, I found, paralleled that of a less able reader learning to decode alphabetic text. I was able to gain insight into the feelings of a less able reader and find specific strategies that teachers of reading might use to enhance reading instruction.

## **Similarities between reading words and music**

While there are many differences between reading alphabetic and musical text, there are also many similarities.

This section describes the similarities relative to a symbol-sound relationship, patterns and practice, novices and experts, learning to read, and aesthetic responses.

**Symbol-Sound Relationship.** Both alphabetic and musical text rely on a system where the readers must acquire a correspondence between a symbol and a sound with a left to right orientation (Adams, 1992; O'Bruba, 1987). In alphabetic text the symbol is a letter used in various combinations to form words and describe thoughts. In musical text three types of symbols are used to indicate pitch, rhythm, and expression, and ultimately to describe feelings and metaphorical ideas (MacKnight, 1975).

**Patterns and Practice.** Reading alphabetic text relies on one's ability to recognize spelling patterns and whole words effortlessly and automatically (Adams, 1992; Anderson, et.al., 1985; Samuels, 1985). Reading musical text is enhanced by the readers' ability to perceive melodic patterns and chord tendencies (Boyle and Lucas, 1990; Colwell, 1963; MacKnight, 1975). The expert musician reads, not a series of notes, but melodic lines and rhythmic patterns (Lewis, 1989; Mueller, 1990; Wolfe, 1989). Automaticity and fluency in both are achieved through practice and repetition (Lewis, 1989; Samuels, 1985; Wolfe, 1989). Developing automaticity allows the reader of both kinds of text to give less attention to decoding individual notes and words, and more attention to deeper meaning and expression of music and literary texts. Musicians at all levels spend considerable time practicing scales, sight reading new and old music, and rehearsing new and familiar pieces. Samuels (1985) tells us, in his article on repeated reading, that this is an idea the reading instructor might borrow. Practice through repeated readings of alphabetic text produces improvement in word recognition, fluency, and comprehension, and allows the reader to perceive

deeper meanings and text structures (Adams, 1992; Herman, 1985; Samuels, 1985; Taylor, 1985).

**Novice and Expert.** There are many differences between novice and expert readers which apply to the reading of both kinds of text. The expert reader processes text more quickly, is more sensitive to types of text, and has a greater knowledge of patterns and text structure (Adams, 1992; Colwell, 1963; MacKnight, 1975). Proficient readers expend less effort decoding, and are able to recognize whole words and musical passages quickly with little effort (Mueller, 1990; Stanovich, 1986). Proficient readers of both kinds of text rely more on background knowledge or nonvisual information than the visual symbols in front of them (Colwell, 1963; Goodman, 1986; MacKnight, 1975; Mueller, 1990; Smith, 1985). Proficient readers use the symbol system in conjunction with the context of the passage and their knowledge of topics, musical forms, and text structures to decode and ultimately ascribe meaning. With both kinds of text the skilled readers' attention is directed primarily by the meaning of the text and not by the individual note, letter, or word.

**Learning to Read.** The reading of both kinds of text improves with wide reading (Adams, 1992; Beck and Juel, 1992; Crider, 1989; Mueller, 1990; Smith, 1985). One becomes a better reader by reading. Knowledge of and instruction relative to text structures also improves the decoding and comprehension of both kinds of text (MacKnight, 1975; Mueller, 1990; Taylor, 1992). Readers of both kinds of text need to master a basic set of rules (Flemming, 1988), however, these rules are best learned in the context of real reading and not as a set of isolated skills (Anderson, et.al., 1985; Beck and Juel, 1992; Boyle and Lucas, 1990; Goodman, 1986; Petzold, 1960). The teacher also needs to encourage students' early attempts to experiment with words and sounds. An emphasis on the

early mastery of skills can frustrate early readers and hinder their attempts to create meaning in music and literature (Bettelheim and Zelan, 1982; Flemming, 1988; Smith, 1985). In learning to read both kinds of text the teacher should build on the reader's strengths and find material that the student is interested in. However, the teacher must also expand students' interests and knowledge by introducing them to new literary and musical forms, topics, and genres (Flemming, 1988; Johnson, 1994).

**Aesthetic Responses.** Both music and literature have technical aspects, but also involve metaphors, feeling, rhythm, images, and structure (Gardner, 1985). Both music and literature involve passion which can stir the soul as well as the mind (Flemming, 1988). Indeed, when readers of alphabetic or musical text are fully engaged with a text they are usually responding on an emotional level as well as an intellectual level. Rosenblatt (1983) and Zarillo (1991) recommend that the majority of elementary literature should be followed by an aesthetic response which engages students' emotions and perception. Bettelheim and Zelan (1982) suggest that learning to read should tap into a child's emotions. If a child is truly interested in a book, decoding skills will more naturally follow. Crider (1989) and Wolfe (1989) both recommend that music teachers encourage musicianship, and find the musical expression in a piece. In short, finding the poetry of a story or a song first will generally enhance the learning of the necessary mechanical aspects.

## **Procedures**

For this study I was looking for a situation where I could experience the processes, thoughts, and feelings of being a less able reader. Observing the many parallels between reading musical text at a high level and learning to read alphabetic text, I decided to audition for the University of Minnesota

concert choir. Although I had studied music as an undergraduate student, I had left this field shortly after graduation in 1981 to pursue graduate work in elementary education. In the fall of 1993, as a graduate student working on my Ph.D. in literacy education, I auditioned for and was accepted into the University of Minnesota concert choir. It had been 12 years since I had interacted musically with people who were capable of reading music as proficiently as the group I now found myself surrounded by. Because of my general inactivity and perhaps my lack of comparable musical ability, I found myself in the role of a less able reader of musical text. I spent two quarters with the choir practicing and performing. Like many elementary school reading classes, the choir rehearsed every day for 50 minutes. There were two performances each quarter. Neither the director nor other choir members were aware of my research project. I kept a journal throughout, describing my progress as a reader of musical text, observations relative to decoding and learning to read musical text, and the feelings of being a less able reader.

## Results

So why can't Andy sing? Or more accurately why can't Andy read the musical text as proficiently as he would like? Does he need to get back to the basics? Are there worksheets he could fill out, or some form of musical phonics that he could immerse himself in? In the section that follows I answer these questions by addressing the topics of evaluation and assessment, social ambiance, the choir director, learning, and ability groups.

**Evaluation and Assessment.** One of my initial discoveries was that anxiety is harmful to the learning and performing process. As a teacher it is easy to forget the apprehension children may feel when asked to perform a task or skill they



feel less proficient at. The first musical assessment I encountered was the audition for the choir. Prospective choir members were ushered into the choir room to audition individually. I performed a prepared musical number, sang several scales, and then was asked to do some sight reading exercises. I had practiced and memorized the prepared piece, and this part of the audition went smoothly. However, during the sight reading exercises I performed far below my capabilities. Two choir directors, an assistant, and an accompanist sat in chairs, staring and nodding politely at me as I struggled to read isolated musical text. I found myself concentrating on random black notes, moving without confidence from one note to the next. The awareness of my own inadequate performance seemed to inhibit my reading ability further.

A second type of assessment occurred three weeks into the quarter. To test our proficiency on a specific piece of music, choir members stood up in groups of four (one tenor, bass, alto, and soprano) to sing to the rest of the choir. This is not unlike what we ask students to do in round robin reading. In this case also my anxiety greatly reduced my reading performance. My goal seemed not to bring meaning or feeling to the music, but to avoid error. I was timid, concentrating on each individual note instead of feeling the music as a whole.

**A Social Ambiance.** During the first couple of choir practices I sang very quietly, because I was anxious and unsure about my performance. I did not want anyone to hear my mistakes, or to discover what a poor sight reader I was. Also, not knowing any of the 40 other people in the room served to heighten my own sense of personal tension. Many choir members seemed to know each other, and most seemed to be much more in control of this musical language than I. I became very aware of those music readers around me. I listened to them closely, using their singing to direct my performance,

to model my tonal quality, and to cue notes and rhythms on various passages. I also found myself watching the director carefully, discovering her to be a very valuable resource. I used her gestures and direction to help cue and signal my reading performance. My attention then was focused on the musical text, the people around me, the choir director, and on my own performance. This left very little cognitive space in which to deal with the decoding of new text, or the expressive aspects of the music. Tension, and attention to multiple cues, thus negatively affected both my sight reading and my ability to bring meaning to the musical text.

**The Choir Director.** The choir director was a master teacher, very comforting, very positive, very adept at working with people, and she had high expectation for her choir. She also used every second of the 50 minute rehearsal. This lack of down time greatly enhanced our concentration and played a role in my eventual improvement as a sight reader. Most rehearsals began by giving a quick backrub to the person next to you, breaking down some of the interpersonal barriers. We also warmed up our voices before we sang. This not only helped physically with the singing process, but got singers thinking about specific techniques or note intervals. During rehearsals the director was very careful not to single anybody out when a mistake was made. Passages that might have given people trouble were done in groups, never individually. Many times in reading classes teachers do just the opposite when a child stumbles over a passage.

**Learning.** After a few weeks I noticed that learning was taking place. I seemed to be getting better at sight reading new pieces. I learned most effectively from whole to part. That is, when I got a feel for the totality of the musical piece, for the affective dimensions first, the technical elements seemed to make more sense. When the director started in the middle of

a musical piece, I often found myself confused until I could place the particular passage in context.

However I also learned from part-to-whole. While I did need to garner a feeling for the whole musical piece, I also profited from those times when I was able to practice small passages, either by myself apart from rehearsal, or in small groups. I needed to repeat certain passages many times before I was comfortable with them. I found I learned best, not by comprehending, but by doing. That is, with more difficult passages, I needed simply to repeat them over and over. Many novice directors and teachers make the mistake of spending great amounts of time trying to explain things to students. For many skills the learner simply needs to repeat them several times before they comprehend or are able to perform. Also, for learning, there needs to be a safe place to practice, a time where mistakes are accepted and even encouraged. If all mistakes were called to my attention early on, my anxiety and attention to each individual note would increase, and my overall performance would greatly decrease.

**Ability Grouping.** Reading music with this group of very proficient sight readers greatly increased my ability to sight read musical text. I read and decoded more complex music than I would normally have. This supports the notion of heterogeneous grouping. However, just as this group of more able readers helped to increase my sight reading proficiency, what of those who are already very able readers? Those at the top need also to be pushed and challenged. They too need a chance to interact and perform with others of similar aptitude and ability, to feel the joy of pushing themselves to their fullest ability. There is a need for experiences of homogeneity in order to give high level readers of both kinds of text a chance to fully develop their potential. So what can we learn that will be of use for the reading instructor? In this

final section I offer nine specific ideas that a classroom reading teacher might use with reading instruction.

**Choral Reading.** Reading in chorus or choral reading is a safe, effective method for improving reading fluency. Readers have multiple cue systems happening all around them in the form of other students and the teacher. Through repetition, and by stressing the expressive and affective elements readers begin to get a feel for the piece as a whole, and bring new meaning to the text, while improving word recognition and fluency.

**Grouping.** There are advantages for the average and low ability reader to be in groups that have high ability readers in them. This provides these readers with the opportunity to interact with good reading models and to become immersed in a variety of genre and ideas. At the same time, the high ability reader must also have occasional opportunities to read and discuss in an accelerated and enriched setting with like-minded peers.

**Practice.** You get better at those things you practice. In the musical context, I saw myself becoming a better sight reader as the weeks progressed. Part of this had to do with gaining more confidence relative to my own ability, and part of it was being able to concentrate and do something over and over. The reading teacher should allow for safe practice of important material, both in groups and individually every day. Being able to read an alphabetic text a second time, or returning to a poem or story allows the reader to revisit old friends and taste success. Students should also have regular practice reading small amounts of new or unfamiliar text.

**Performance.** Having a performance or an audience in mind as we practiced in a musical setting made the experience

more authentic. We knew we had to convey a message to real people. In reading class, performing can be in the form of Readers' Theatre, puppet shows, dramas, audio-taped radio dramas, choral reading, or poetic renditions. Real audiences make the reading task more authentic and add a new level of energy. Most children love to perform if the conditions are safe and the task is within their abilities, and performances are kept simple, easy, and non-threatening. Performing for classmates or quick visits to younger classrooms are always appreciated by both audience and performers.

**Stress.** Stress is a debilitating factor when learning to read. Too much stress causes the reader to attend to irrelevant features, clutters up short term memory, and encourages word-by-word reading. The reading teacher needs to create an environment that is non-threatening and as stress-free as possible. Surface level mistakes should be attended to as seldom as possible.

**Interpersonal Barriers.** This is very much related to stress. I found in the choir room, as soon as I began to interact with other students, my stress level decreased. I was more comfortable making mistakes and singing in front of people I knew. In a reading context, it is important to get students to interact with each other in cooperative learning situations, in group discussions, or informally. Such interaction is a valuable social, emotional, and academic tool.

**Singing to Read.** Music can be used with text for beginning readers to induce a multi-dimensional, bimodal learning experience. When singing to read, the tune will help reinforce word and vocabulary knowledge. In these instances the teacher writes the words to familiar songs on a large poster sheet, displayed for students to follow along.

**Whole to Part and Part to Whole.** Both ways of learning must be attended to. In music, pulling a passage out of context made it very hard to read. In reading, pulling words and phrases out of context increases the difficulty of the task and makes it less authentic. When reading, students should get a picture of the whole, using pre-reading experiences such as story or concept mapping, story previews, webbing, or brainstorming. When practicing or learning about a specific skill and strategy, students need a sense of context.

**Fun.** The most important prescription found here is to keep things fun. Things that are interesting and enjoyable are much more apt to be attended to and learned. Reading material should be relevant to the student life and developmental level. During reading class the teacher should try to eliminate down time, keeping the class moving along at a brisk rate. Interesting reading classes can also be obtained by allowing for active participation, celebrating students' ideas and interpretations, and providing opportunities for students to concentrate and practice.

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# Kwanzaa: A Holiday of Principles

Phyllis M. Ferguson  
Terrell A. Young

As soon as Jonathan Daines learned about Kwanzaa, the seven-day celebration millions of African Americans celebrate each year between December 26 and January 1, he wanted to find ways of bringing it into his classroom. He read everything he could find about Kwanzaa. At first, he read a couple of books about Kwanzaa to his students. Each succeeding year, he added more and more until he developed a three-week Kwanzaa study. The purpose of this article is to provide background information about Kwanzaa, a sample Kwanzaa study and children's literature and other resources for teachers to use in creating their own Kwanzaa study.

## Background information

Maulana Karenga, chair and professor of Black Studies at California State University at Long Beach, created Kwanzaa in 1966 to help African Americans celebrate their African heritage. Kwanzaa, based on traditional African harvest festivals, means first fruits in Swahili. Karenga developed seven principles of Kwanzaa, the *Nguzo Saba*, to be highlighted during the seven-day celebration. One principle is featured each day of Kwanzaa. *Umoja* (oo-MOH-jah), or unity, is the first principle and is celebrated on December 26. A black candle is lit in the center of a *kinara* (kee-NAH-rah), a candle holder — holding seven candles — three green, three red, and one black as



celebrants gather and focus on unity in the family, school, community, nation, and/or race.

The second principle, Kujichagulia (KOO-gee-CHA-goo-lee-ah) represents self-determination. Ujima (oo-GEE-mah), or collective work and responsibility, is the focus of the third day; a red candle is lit. The principle of Ujamaa (oo-jah-MAH, cooperative economics, is highlighted on day four. On day five, the fifth candle is lit for Nia (NEE-ah) which means purpose. Creativity, Kuumba (koo-OOM-bah) is celebrated on day six. On the last day of Kwanzaa, the seventh candle is lit for Imani (ee-MON-ee) or faith. On this, the last day of Kwanzaa, a great feast is held. Figure 1 contains the Nguzo Saba rewritten for children by Margaret Bland.

## A Kwanzaa lesson plan

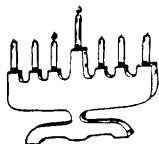
**Introduction.** Mr. Daines introduces Kwanzaa to his students by reading aloud Deborah Chocolate's *Kwanzaa* (1990). He chose this book since it provides a good overview of the holiday. After the reading, they are then ready to create posters to represent the principles celebrated on the seven days of Kwanzaa. Students are divided into seven groups with each group illustrating one of the Kwanzaa principles. At the top of their illustration, the Swahili term for the principle is placed with the English translation written at the bottom as illustrated in Figure 2. The students then hang the seven posters in order on a clothesline or stand them on a chalk tray.

**Day Two.** Students listen to the song, "Seven Principles," from the album *See What the End's Gonna Be* by Sweet Honey in the Rock. The seven posters can be distributed to the children, and they can practice putting them in order as they sing along with the recording.

**Figure 1**  
***The Mguzo Saba: The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa***

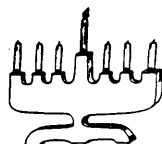
**1. UMOJA (UNITY)**

We can work with others in our families, schools, communities and nation and be an important part of these groups.



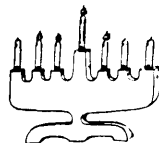
**2. KUJICHAGULIA (SELF-DETERMINATION)**

We can do our own thinking about what is right and fair and decide how we should behave.



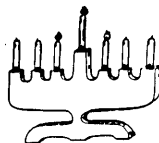
**3. UJIMA (COLLECTIVE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY)**

We can help other children when they are doing something appropriate. We can be responsible for things we are expected to do.



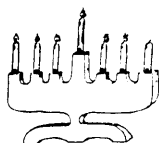
**4. UJAMMAA (COOPERATIVE ECONOMICS)**

We can share things we have with children who need them. We can each give a little and it will become a lot.



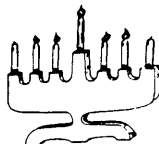
**5. NIA (PURPOSE)**

We can learn. We can get knowledge that can be used to benefit ourselves and others.



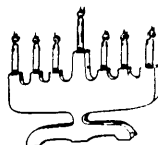
**6. KUUMBA (CREATIVITY)**

Creative thoughts and actions get helpful things done in interesting ways. We can use our talents to bring beauty to things we do.



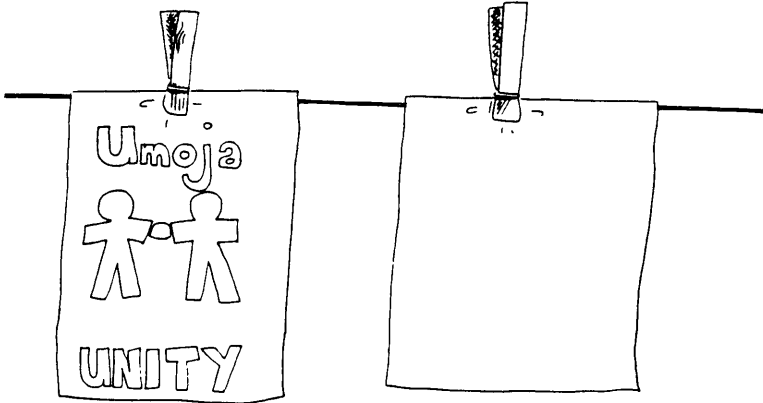
**7. IMANI (FAITH)**

We can believe in those principles and practices that protect and make human life better. We can believe in ourselves and know that we are important and can do things well.



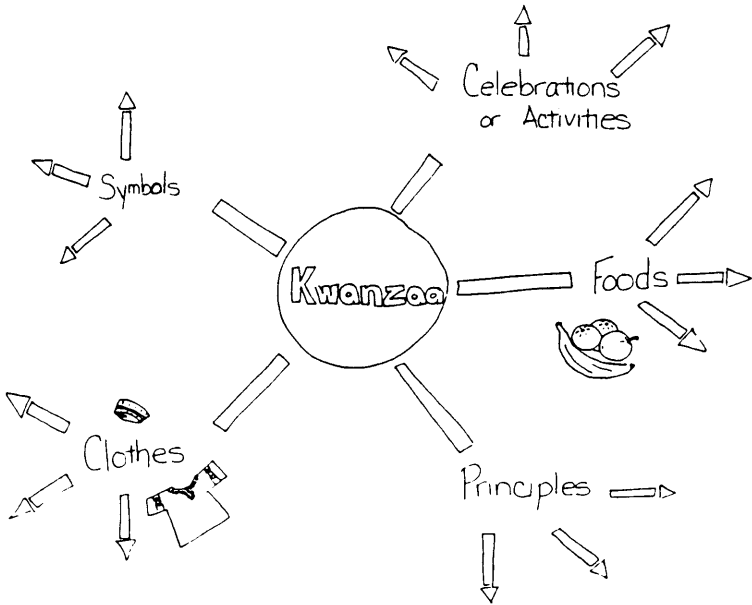
Next, the teacher reads aloud *Celebrating Kwanzaa* by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith (1993). After the students have enjoyed the book and discussed it, they are ready to create a semantic map of the important elements of Kwanzaa. Mr. Daines draws a map similar to the one shown in Figure 3 on the chalkboard or an overhead transparency. The students work in small groups to brainstorm important elements of Kwanzaa. After the students have worked together, the whole class creates a group semantic map. The semantic map can later be converted to a bulletin board illustrated with student created or collected pictures.

*Figure 2*  
*Kwanzaa Posters*



**Day Three.** Students again sing "Seven Principles." To review the seven principles, students place cards in a pocket chart with the Swahili terms for the each of the seven principles in the proper order. Next, they place the matching English term next to the Swahili name for each principle. Finally, the students brainstorm and write class definitions or applications for each of the seven principles. For example, an application for Umoja, unity, might be written as "We can work together in our family, school, and community." These definitions or applications can be placed next to the English terms.

**Figure 3**  
*Kwanzaa Semantic Map*



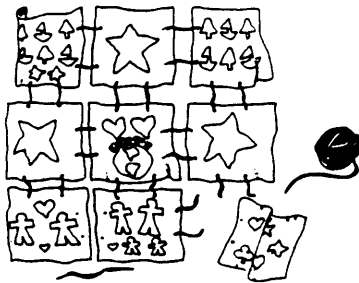
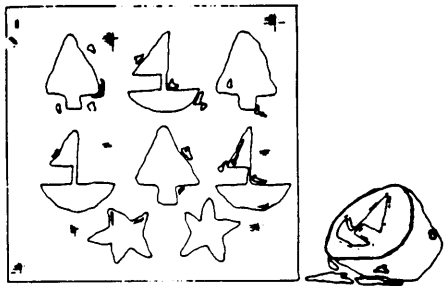
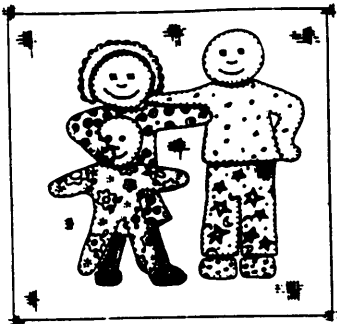
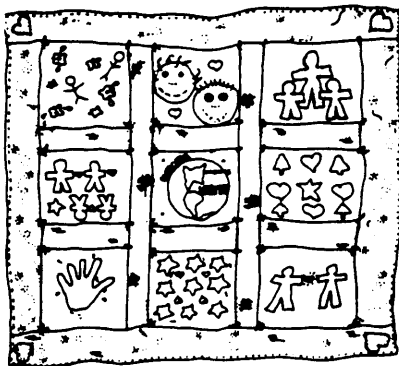
After working through the process of sorting and re-defining the principles, Mr. Daines makes a duplicated master of smaller versions of the cards. Students cut out the cards and in small groups sort them into small personal sized pocket charts. To extend the activity, he asks the children to write examples on a fourth card to place next to their definitions or applications. For example, children might write something like "We can all work together to keep our school clean." Day three's activities are complete after the teacher has read aloud Andrea Davis Pinkney's *Seven Candles for Kwanzaa* (1993).

**Day Four.** To focus on Umoja, the teacher reads aloud *The Quilt* by Ann Jonas and discusses with his students how the pieces represent the child's life. He also reads Valerie Flournoy's *Patchwork Quilt* (1985). The students explain how the quilt represents the family. Next the students can create a class quilt to illustrate the class diversity and unity. Children each make quilt pieces representing themselves or their families. The quilt piece may be an illustration or a pattern illustrating interests. The illustration can be a drawing or collage (to simulate applique); potato prints work well for patterns. The quilt pieces can be joined together with yarn to create a wall hanging or placed on a wall in patchwork fashion as illustrated in Figure 4.

**Day Five.** To introduce Kujichagulia, the principle of self-determination, Mr. Daines reads aloud from *The Hundred Penny Box* by Sharon Mathis. He asks his students for examples of Aunt Dew's self-determination. After discussing *The Hundred Penny Box*, the students then create personal time-lines with pennies representing years of their lives as illustrated in Figure 5. Children can predict their future accomplishments as they complete their time-lines.

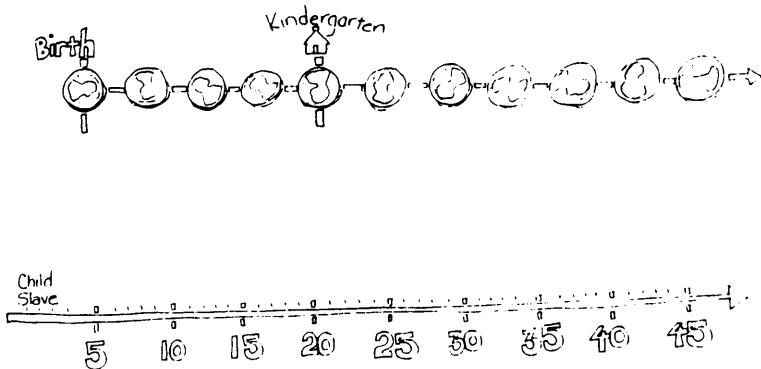
Many note with surprise those things that students consider momentous.

Figure 4  
*Kwanzaa Quilts*



**Day Six.** Mr. Daines begins this day by reading aloud *Who Owns the Sun?* by Stacy Chbosky (1988). He leads the students in a discussion of the boy's life as a slave and his accomplishments. In small groups, the students could discuss the determination the boy demonstrated throughout his life and especially in becoming a teacher. After whole-class debriefing, Mr. Daines oversees his class' creation of a time-line illustrating the boy's life from his beginnings as a slave until he becomes a teacher. (This time-line provides the students with a background for learning about the principle of purpose.)

**Figure 5**  
***Penny Time-Lines***



**Day Seven.** To introduce Ujima, the principle of collective responsibility, Mr. Daines reads aloud Phil Mendez's *The Black Snowman* (1989). The students discuss their feelings about the book and then focus on the family's relationship and how they work together. After their discussion, the students meet in small groups to brainstorm ways they can apply collective responsibility in their families, the school and the community. As a class, each group shares the results of their brainstorming. Children each create a personal goal for becoming a more responsible family member and write about the plans for achieving the goal in their journals. As a class, the students may select two goals for making their school and community better places (e.g., cleaning the playground each week, organizing a group to paint over graffiti, cleaning up a park, planting and maintaining a flower garden at a community center).

**Day Eight.** Once again the students listen as their teacher reads *The Black Snowman*. Today's focus is on the portion where the snowman asks if the boys know about their ancestors: "Have you sat at the table of your forefathers? Have you accepted the shield of courage they have passed along to you?" Mr. Daines uses this as an opportunity to introduce Margaret Musgrove's *Ashanti to Zulu* (1976) and Ifeoma Onyefulu's *A Is for Africa* (1993). These books are alphabet books about Africa.

**Day Nine.** The students use a number of nonfiction and reference books about Africa as they work together to create an ABC book about Africa or African Americans.

**Day Ten.** Mr. Daines reminds his students about the kente cloth worn by the snowman in *The Black Snowman*. He shows them a kente cloth before reading *Huggy Bean and the Origin of the Magic Kente Cloth* by Linda Cousins (1992).



The students discuss the significance of the kente cloth and Mr. Daines explains that students will create their own woven products in art class. He shows them several woven products they can learn to make.

**Day Eleven.** Sheila Smith, the school art teacher, teaches the students to make paper weavings, straw weavings, or paper plate weavings. The children learn how to make the weavings and then complete them in their free time or at home. (The weavings will be sold at the class' Karamu festival).

**Day Twelve.** Mr. Daines introduces Nia, or purpose, to the students by rereading *Who Owns the Sun?* and discussing the possible goals the child in the book may have set for himself in order to escape slavery and become a teacher. Mr. Daines then distributes a number of brief biographies of African Americans to the children. In small groups, the children select a book, read it together, and then complete a questionnaire similar to the sample seen in Figure 6. When they are back in a large group, students share their person and how he or she overcame obstacles to achieve his/her goals or purposes.

*Figure 6*  
*Sample Questionnaire*

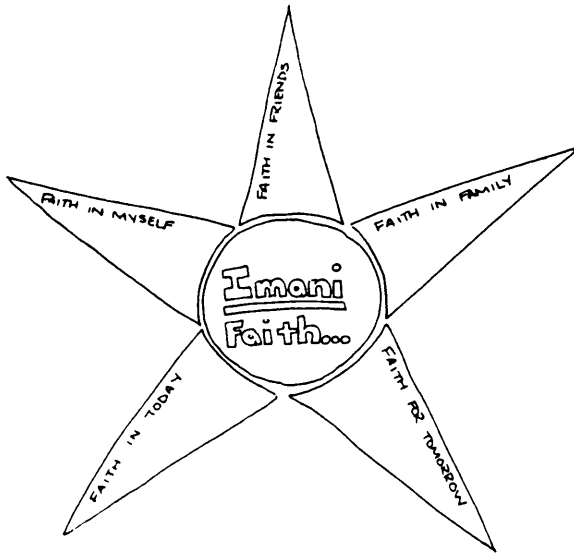
Name of Person: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What were this individual's major accomplishments?
2. What goals did the person have to set?
3. As a child, what could have been this person's vision?
4. What did this person do to achieve goals?
5. What made achieving the goals so difficult?

**Day Thirteen.** Mr. Daines reads Faith Ringgold's *Dinner at Aunt Connie's* (1993) to the students. After the children discuss what they enjoyed about the book, they plan and make place mats for the person they read and wrote about on the previous day. Students will display their place mats at the Karamu celebration.

**Days Fourteen and Fifteen.** To introduce Kuumba, or creativity, Mr. Daines reads Mary Hoffman's *Amazing Grace* (1991). After students have experienced the story and shared what they like about it, they are ready to brainstorm in small groups about what creativity means and all the ways it can be expressed. For this activity, the students use a roundtable brainstorming in which one paper and one pencil go around the group with each person talking in turn and then writing responses. With roundtable brainstorming, students may not pass. If someone cannot think of an answer, other students make suggestions and the stalled student chooses one of the recommended suggestions. The students next meet as a class to create a list of ways to express creativity. The students are reminded about the upcoming Karamu celebration and the need to provide some type of program. Mr. Daines divides his class into four groups, and they plan presentations based on African or African American literature. A possible program might include the following: a dramatization of Verna Aardema's *Who's in Rabbit's House?* (1977) with student created masks; a Reader's Theater presentation of Patricia McKissack's *Flossie and the Fox* (1986); a choral reading of James Weldon Johnson's *Lift Every Voice and Sing* (1993) and a song and visual presentation to accompany *Follow the Drinking Gourd* (1988) by Jeanette Winters. Other possibilities include writing a rap using the seven Kwanzaa principles or creating a Kwanzaa mural or display.

**Figure 7**  
**Imani Stars**



**Day Sixteen.** Mr. Daines reads Denise Burden-Patron's *Imani's Gift for Kwanzaa* to introduce the final principle, Imani or faith. The students discuss how Imani gave gifts and showed faith. They learn about different types of faith: faith in self; faith in friends; faith in family; faith in higher powers; and faith for tomorrow. Students then create stars using triangles and a circle as shown in Figure 7. On each ray of the star, they illustrate some application or demonstration of their faith.

### Other Kwanzaa resources

Many Kwanzaa books and resources which are available for teachers to use in Kwanzaa studies are listed below in the Appendix. The annotations following each title are taken from each book's Library of Congress Cataloging in Press information found on the verso of the title page.

## Conclusion

Daines introduced his students to a variety of multicultural literature throughout the year. He used Kwanzaa as an opportunity to pique his students' interest and curiosity about their own cultural heritage, and rich reading and discussion experiences followed. Jonathan Daines and his students reaped many benefits from their study of Kwanzaa. Along with learning about the history and significance of this holiday, they were able to celebrate quality living. Daines found that Kwanzaa was a holiday that had meaning for *all* students. It was truly a "holiday of principles."

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- Burden-Patron, D. (1992). *Imani's gift at Kwanzaa*. NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Chbosky, S. (1988). *Who owns the sun?* Kansas City MO: Landmark Editions.
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- Cousins, L. (1992). *Huggy Bean and the origin of the magic kente cloth*. NY: Gumbs & Thomas.
- Flourney, V. (1985). *The patchwork quilt*. NY: Dial.
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- Hoyt-Goldsmith, D. (1993). *Celebrating Kwanzaa*. NY: Holiday House.
- Jonas, A. (1984). *The Quilt*. NY: Greenwillow.
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- Ringgold, F. (1993). *Dinner at Aunt Connie's*. NY: Hyperion.
- Sweet Honey in the Rock. *See what the end's gonna be*. Redwood Records.
- Winter, J. (1988). *Follow the drinking gourd*. NY: Knopf.

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## APPENDIX RECOMMENDED BOOKS

### Children's Books

- Banks, V. (1985). *The Kwanzaa coloring book*. Los Angeles CA: Sala Enterprises. The original Kwanzaa coloring book. Based on harvest festivals held in Africa, Kwanzaa is celebrated in the United States between December 26 and January 1.
- Chocolate, D. (1992). *My first Kwanzaa book*. NY: Scholastic. Introduces Kwanzaa, the holiday in which Afro-Americans celebrate their cultural heritage.
- Freeman, D., & MacMillan, D. (1992). *Kwanzaa*. NY: Enslow. Introduces the African American holiday begun in 1966 which celebrates seven important principles.
- Goss, L. (1993). *It's Kwanzaa time!* Jacksonville FL: Philmod. Stories, recipes, and activities introduce the holiday of Kwanzaa and the ways in which it is celebrated.
- Morninghouse, S. (1992). *Habari gani? = what's the news? A Kwanzaa story*. Seattle WA: Open Hand. A family celebrates each day of Kwanzaa.
- Pinkney, A. (1993). *Seven candles for Kwanzaa*. NY: Dial. Describes the origins and practices of Kwanzaa, the seven-day festival during which people of African descent rejoice in their ancestral values.
- Porter, A. (1991). *Kwanzaa*. NY: Carolrhoda. Describes the origins and practices of Kwanzaa, an African-American holiday created to remind African-Americans of their history and their cultural origins.
- Riehecky, J. (1993). *Kwanzaa*. Chicago: Children's Press. Introduces Kwanzaa, the holiday in which African-Americans celebrate their cultural heritage.
- Ross, K. (1994). *Crafts for Kwanzaa*. NY: Millbrook Press. Ross suggests a number of crafts students can create as they learn about Kwanzaa.
- Saint James, S. (1994). *The gifts of Kwanzaa*. Morton Grove IL: Albert Whitman.
- Walter, M. (1989). *Have a happy--*. NY: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard. Upset because his birthday falls on Christmas and will therefore be eclipsed as usual, and worried that there is less money because his father is out of work, eleven-year-old Chris takes solace in the carvings he is preparing for Kwanzaa, the Afro-American celebration of their cultural heritage.

### Resources for Teachers and Parents

- Anderson, D. (1993). *Kwanzaa: An everyday resource and instructional guide*. NY: Gumbs & Thomas.

- Copage, E. (1991). *Kwanzaa: An African-American celebration of culture and cooking*. NY: Morrow.
- Karenga, M. (1988). *The African-American holiday of Kwanzaa: A celebration of family, community & culture*. Los Angeles CA: University of Sankore.
- McClester, C. (1993). *Kwanzaa: Everything you always wanted to know but didn't know where to ask*. NY: Gumbs & Thomas.
- Thompson, H. (1993). *Let's celebrate Kwanzaa: An activity book for young readers*. NY: Gumbs & Thomas.

**Picture book biographies of African Americans are:**

By David A. Adler: *A Picture Book of Jesse Owens* (1992), *A Picture Book of Rosa Parks* (1993), *A Picture Book of Frederick Douglas* (1993), *A Picture Book of Harriet Tubman* (1992), *A Picture Book of Martin Luther King* (1989), *Jackie Robinson: He Was the First* (1989), *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Free at Last* (1986). All published by New York: Holiday House.

By Joann Johansen Burch, Marian Wright Edelman, *Children's Champion* (1994). Brookfield, CT: Millbrook Press.

By Patricia McKissack, & Frederick McKissack: *The Father of Black History* (1991), *Mary McLeod* (1992), *Booker T. Washington: Leader and Educator* (1992), *Sojourner Truth: A Voice for Freedom* (1992), *Madam C.J. Walker: Self-Made Millionaire* (1992), *Jesse Owens: Olympic Star* (1992), *Langston Hughes: Great American Poet* (1992), *Zora Neale Hurston, Writer and Storyteller* (1992), *Paul Robeson: A Voice to Remember* (1992), *Satchel Paige: The Best Arm in Baseball* (1992), *The Story of Booker T. Washington* (1991), *Frederick Douglass: Leader Against Slavery* (1991), *Mary Church Terrell: Leader for Equality* (1991), *Louis Armstrong: Jazz Musician* (1991), *Mary McLeod Bethune: A Great Teacher* (1991), *George Washington Carver: The Peanut Scientist* (1991), *Ida B. Wells-Barnett: A Voice Against Violence* (1991), *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Man of Peace* (1991), *Ralph J. Bunche: Peacemaker* (1991), *Marian Anderson: A Great Singer* (1991). All published by Hillside, NJ: Enslow Publishers. *James Weldon Johnson: "Lift Every Voice and Sing"* (1990). Chicago: Children's Press.

By Walter Dean Myers, *Young Martin's Promise* (1993). Austin TX: Raintree Steck-Vaughn.

By Andrea Davis Pinkney, *Dear Benjamin Banneker*. (1994). San Diego CA: Harcourt Brace & Co. *Alvin Ailey* (1993) New York: Hyperion Books for Children.



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