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California State University

San Bernardino

MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE THROUGH THE MAGIC  
OF STORYTELLING

A Project Submitted to  
The Faculty of the School of Education  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the  
Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Education: Reading Option

by

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1991

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# MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE THROUGH THE MAGIC OF STORYTELLING

Mary K. Chartier, M.A.  
California State University, San Bernardino, 1991

## Statement of Problem

The purpose of this project was to ascertain the need for multicultural literature in the primary grades and to study the use of story telling and creative dramatics as ways to present the literature.

Throughout the centuries, man has communicated his feelings, ideas, and cultural values through stories.

The writer of this project felt that by using storytelling and creative dramatics children could best experience the literature of many cultures and that this experience could lead to greater social understanding.

## Procedure

Educational journals and books were first reviewed to determine the status of multicultural education in America. America is a country with many diverse cultures, but these cultures do not automatically involve themselves in the educational process.

Storytelling and creative dramatics were examined as ways to involve all students in the educational process. Journal articles and books were reviewed to see if this idea had merit.

This writer also produced a small handbook that was of benefit to herself, elementary school teachers, and school librarians. The handbook presented story hours using the literature of five cultural groups: African, European, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American. Each literature unit included the following: (a) warm-up exercises, (b) reading aloud or storytelling examples, (c) creative dramatics examples, (d) follow-up activities, and (e) a bibliography of children's picture books from the particular culture.

### Results

In the literature review, one strong factor noted for minority students' success in school was that the teachers and school administrators were sensitive to the cultures represented in their classrooms and schools. If a student feels that his culture is valued, he will be more likely to involve himself in the learning process.

In the second half of the literature review, the success of folklore and stories for teaching cultural values was emphasized. Many authors considered the folklore of a culture as a mirror of that culture.

### Conclusion and Implications

The writer found that involving the children in storytelling and creative dramatics helps the children to experience the multicultural literature and to build affective images of the literature that would stay in the students' minds.

Teachers can use multicultural literature in a fun way that strengthens auditory, oral, and kinesthetic modalities, and everyone benefits from the experience. Multicultural understanding and tolerance can be better achieved, and diverse cultures can work together to produce a positive future.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my wonderful husband Richard for his support of my education, with love.

To my Mom and Dad Kathryn and Ralph Hubbs, who encouraged my reading and love of books.

To my beautiful daughter Michelle and her husband Richard Burley, who also love books.

To all my teachers and advisors, especially Dr. Katharine Busch and Dr. Kathy O'Brien for their enthusiasm, expertise, and guidance throughout my graduate studies.

To my father-in-law Rene L. (Ray) Chartier for his fun-loving folklore, warmth, and adventurous storytelling; and to my mother-in-law Maria Chartier for sharing her folk wisdom.

To my sister Barbara and her husband Michael Ganter; my brother-in-law Douglas R. Chartier and his wife Diana; family friend Kim Hall; and finally to all my family, friends and in-laws, who encouraged me to finish my master's degree.

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MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE THROUGH THE MAGIC  
OF STORYTELLING

The magic of storytelling to communicate cultural values and emotions has long been a part of man's history. Stories from the myths of the Greek and Roman gods to the African oral tradition, the parables of the Bible, and the Koans of the Orient have been used to illustrate cultural ideals and to fix those ideals affectively in their listeners' minds.

Stories can help in teaching children cultural values that they will process and take into their lives. In a diverse and multiethnic society such as the United States, it is important for children to respect other cultures and to feel that their own culture is valued. "When a child perceives a writing task or a text and its symbolic contents as belonging to and reaffirming his or her culture identity, it is more likely that he or she will become engaged and individual meaning will be transmitted or derived" (Ferdman, 1990, p. 183).

Multicultural story hours and literature lessons help children to do this not only on an intellectual level but also on an affective or emotional level. Comparing values and characteristics of various cultures help them to become better citizens of the world.

### Statement of Problem

The California Department of Education, concerned with the challenge of making learning meaningful to all students despite their ethnic backgrounds, has worked to establish both a new English Language Arts Framework and a new History Social Science Framework. Each of these frameworks stress the importance of a literature-based curriculum that reflects the many cultures of our nation and of the world.

The problem addressed by this project is that teachers need to effectively implement the mandates of the new frameworks and to bring both literature and social studies to students of all ethnic backgrounds. Many teachers do not have multicultural literature in their classrooms, or if they do, it is limited to one or two groups rather than the full range of ethnic groups represented in California. This project aims to help teachers become familiar with some of the rich literature from many cultures and to make it more available to them. This project also seeks to show teachers in a non-threatening way that using literature from many cultures can be fun, and through storytelling and creative dramatics, children can become easily involved in learning language arts and social studies.

The English Language Arts Framework was created as part of an educational reform movement in California. Its goals are (1) "To prepare all students to function as informed and effective citizens in our democratic society; (2) To prepare all students to function effectively in the world of work; (3) To prepare all students to realize personal fulfillment" (California State Department of Education [CSDE], 1987, pp. 1-2).

To accomplish these goals, the Framework calls for emphasis on meaning-centered curriculum. Instruction is integrated by using listening, speaking, reading, and writing approaches. The best vehicle for generating meaning in all the systems of our language is through a literature-based curriculum rather than through phonics exercises, or a vocabulary-based textbook.

In a literature-based program students learn the best of human values, and can explore ideas from diverse people and times. "To capture the breath of human experience, a strong literature program offers the language and literature of many nations and perspectives; of racially and ethnically and culturally diverse societies; and of poems and narrations, fables and legends, and stories and plays. With a rich and diverse background in literature, students can begin to

discover both the remarkable wholeness in the intricately woven tapestry of American society and the unique variety brought by many cultures to that intriguing fabric" (CSDE, 1987, p. 7).

The History-Social Science Framework also calls for literature-based curriculum to help teach cultural values. Indeed, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Social Science Framework, is that it "emphasizes the importance of history as a story well told" (California State Department of Education [CSDE], 1988, p. 4). One of the curriculum strands of this framework is Cultural Literacy. One of the goals in this strand is to "Develop a multicultural perspective that respects the dignity and worth of all people" (CSDE, 1988, p. 15). The use of multicultural literature from the earliest grades helps students to develop that respect.

Literature is a magic mirror wherein children see others like themselves. They also meet characters which provide inspiration for the reader's future growth. Both frameworks encourage the use of many different sensory fields which help to bond the students to the ideas presented. These sensory fields includes oral, auditory, visual, and kinesthetic experiences which are found in the use of creative

dramatics. The new literature based framework emphasizes meaning as being more important than individual words, and seeks to provide meaning to the children through good literature.

I have chosen ten stories of various cultural groups, and will provide activities to take the children Into, Beyond, and Through the quality literature. Pre-reading, "Into," activities help to build background, concepts, and make predictions (O'Brien, 1989, pp. 1-3).

Reading activities, "Through," confirms and refines predictions, while post activities (Beyond) extends the story into other processes, stories, and content areas.

I have found the use of creative dramatics very effective in having people remember stories, and this activity will often be used as a part of the whole language process of these lessons. The English language Framework calls for activities to use a variety of sensory activities, and creative dramatics provides oral learning as well as sequential movement and emotional appeal.

I have used it for all ages as a precursor for Reading activities. I have even used it as a form of Reader's Theater with adult literacy students. If

people see reading in a fun light, they will want to keep reading and thus keep up their skills and continue to be productive members of society. This project explores ways to make reading come alive and celebrate the values and riches of many cultures.

#### Theoretical Foundations

This project is written from a holistic or whole language point of view. Unlike the phonics model of reading, which focuses on the individual sound phoneme, or the skills approach which focuses on the individual word, whole language focuses on the meaning of what is written. It is a transactive approach wherein the reader's own knowledge and experience builds a schema of information that he brings to his reading and helps him make sense of what he reads. Teachers can make use of the schema theory by providing rich pre-reading activities, during the "Into" section of the lessons, and thus helping to maximize the comprehension that the child generates from his reading.

The reading material that the child is presented is different in the whole language approach than in the phonics or skills methods. The whole language approach stresses the use of quality children's literature which is enhanced by memorable language and strong characters, rather than the contrived stories that are



found in basal skill readers or the word drills of phonics exercises.

In the lessons offered in this project I will be using quality literature to read "Through."

"Individual interpretation, criticism, and response are the emphasis of instruction" (O'Brien, 1989, pp. 1-3). Discussion is encouraged. Students are asked to predict what they think will happen and in reading will judge whether or not their predictions came true (Busch, 1989, p. 1).

The Language Arts framework encourages many approaches to literature. "Teachers who evoke a desire to read the literature by asking provocative questions, providing interesting background information, or structuring oral activities enable students to explore the work in depth, ask the important questions and explore the possibilities for learning in the work, and connect the meaning of the work to the world and their own lives" (CSDE, 1987, p. 17).

The language arts curriculum is most effective when the children are led "Into, Through, and Beyond" a piece of literature. "Direct teaching of literature helps students move into, through, and beyond the literary work to a new understanding of themselves and the world around them" (p. 17).

There are different ways of proceeding with a literature lesson. Some teachers prefer the use of literature to introduce a class to a thematic unit. Other teachers emphasize the use of a piece of literature as the "through" section. Additional literature can also be used as a bridge to the "beyond" section leading the readers on to other literature, or other areas of study. I feel that whole language philosophy is flexible enough for literature to be used in all phases of "into, through, and beyond." Much depends on the main purpose of the session. For a social studies unit, literature may be used as an impetus to research and writing that will take up the main time of the class. In a literature lesson, the piece of literature will be focused on before and after its oral or silent reading. Sometimes several pieces of literature can be presented together as in a story hour around a central theme.

In the "Beyond" part of a literature lesson the whole language approach delights in multi-sensory activities which provides different avenues of communication. My favorite form of communication is the use of creative dramatics. Acting out stories help provide both auditory and kinesthetic experiences to help children remember the stories.

This extension of art forms is encouraged by the English Language Arts Framework. Indeed, the Framework calls oral language the heart of a language arts program (CSDE, 1987). Oral reading can be done, as well as a classroom project of choral reading thus strengthening speaking and auditory skills. Writing their own stories help the children develop another mode of communication and helps them to remember what they have read. Activities in art and music also provide ways to extend the students' communication opportunities. These activities involve the students in an affective way and helps them to remember the literature and subjects they are studying.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to explore the need for multicultural literature in teaching from a whole language perspective, and to examine ways to involve the children in the literature through story hours using reading aloud, storytelling, and creative dramatics. One of the goals of education in America today is to train citizens who can compete in the world market.

The minority students need to feel that they can participate in our educational system, and the majority students need to learn respect for other cultures because they will be working with many cultures in tomorrow's marketplace.

Not only do we Americans have to think more multiculturally when we view our position in the world, but because of our increasing multiethnic society, we have to think about multicultural communication in our own communities. In San Bernardino County in 1989-90 the enrollment by race was White, 55,6%; Hispanic, 30%; Black, 9.6%; Asian, 2.9%; American Indian, 0.8%; Filipino, 0.7%; and Pacific Islander, 0.4% (San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, 1991, p. 5).

Although we live in a pluralistic and diverse society, there are people who want to consolidate our knowledge into "lists" of items and people to know in order to be culturally literate. In Cultural Literacy by E. D. Hirsch, Jr., (1987) he proposes such a list of items that a "common reader" should know and be able to identify. Hirsch believes that people living in western civilization have common cultural bonds that are easy to acknowledge. "Such agreement about literate culture should, in theory, enable a random group of literate Americans to compile a list of its core contents." Hirsch admitted that, "In 1983, I persuaded two of my colleagues at the University of Virginia, Joseph Kett, chairman of the department of history, and James Trefil, professor of physics, to help me compile such a list" (p.25).

That three men could design a list and get such a public response seems very presumptive. Who are they to decide what shall be included from our diverse nation? Since they were "traditionalists" the list is conservative and includes few items of Native American, Hispanic, Asian, or Black cultures. These cultures are part of America, and their values should be included on any list. The majority needs to know something about the various cultures in America, and their lack of

knowledge could prove embarrassing in the world marketplace.

Bernardo M. Ferdman in his article in the Harvard Educational Review (1990) agrees that there is a debate about what is literacy and how best to achieve it. Some cultures depend more on oral language than on written language. We each have a cultural identity which is made up from the image of the behaviors, beliefs, and values appropriate to members of the ethnic group to which we belong.

Because we belong to many diverse groups in America, Ferdman contends that there are divergent views as to what the relationship among the culturally diverse groups should be. One school of thought, the pluralists, suggests that each group goes on its own and preserves its own heritage. The conservatives argue that the majority should rule and everyone should speak English and adopt Anglo traditions. A third group calls for a new "American" blend, a "melting pot" culture consisting of something from each group. How an educational system chooses to view these ideas will have an impact on how ethnic diversity is handled in their schools.

Ferdman goes on to examine the individual in his culture and even asks what culture is in itself. He

quotes Monica Heller as saying that "culture is not only a set of beliefs and values but that it also includes our everyday ways of behaving." The individuals view of reality is mediated by the groups ideas of that reality. Culture then has a lot to do with how a student views literacy or school knowledge. She further states that, "Once a person acquires the requisite skills, she also acquires the quality of mind known as literacy, together with the right to be labeled as a literate person" (p. 186).

In a multiethnic society there will be variant conceptions of what literacy is. Ferdman's conception of what a multiethnic society does with literacy is very similar to the model of whole language. "In a culturally heterogenous society, literacy ceases to be a characteristic inherent solely in the individual. It becomes an interactive process that is constantly redefined and renegotiated, as the individual transacts with the sociocultural fluid surroundings" (p. 187).

In a society with more than one culture, the student who is becoming literate "may be faced with an array of alternative methods and contents representing different views of literacy. The value placed on behaviors that are construed as literate in the context

of one group will not be equivalent to the value given them by a different culture" (p. 188).

Schools play a very important role in that the student becomes literate in the cultural image represented by the community. Those of the dominant culture will have more consistency between what they learn at school and what they learn at home.

Education can help self-esteem by providing the student with tools to define their cultural identity. This can be done by encouraging the student who is becoming literate to look at his own culture and to compare it to others. Ferdman states that "the goal should be to facilitate the process by which students are permitted to discover and explore ethnic connections" (p. 200). Students should also be encouraged to decide for themselves what cultural literacy they want to achieve. Again this is similar to the whole language philosophy wherein the students help to choose the curriculum.

In conclusion, Ferdman repeats his belief that cultural diversity influences cultural identity of the individual. Cultural identity changes as a person becomes literate and continues to be literate. Ferdman states:



When everyone--minority and majority alike--is encouraged and supported in the development of a clear and strong cultural identity we may well see a society . . . which would permit the full range of individual variations, choice, and flexibility, while at the same time recognizing the importance group identifications hold for individuals (p. 201).

Ferdman was concerned that minority students receive a fair share within the educational system and that they would have the opportunity to study their own cultures, too. Broderick (1972) agrees with the necessity to offer multicultural studies and expands the thought to include members of the majority culture. "For schools and libraries the challenge is twofold. In those areas where one of the minority groups predominates, the need is to understand the value system of the group, accept it, and work within its parameters . . . . A second area of concern is the need to develop programs in pluralistic culture for students in all-white schools. Their need to understand that there are as many ways of life as there are different peoples is vital for reaching some national understanding of our problems and possibilities" (p. 734).

In the following section, I am going to discuss the education of four minority groups--Native Americans, Blacks, Hispanic and Asian students--and what has been successful in their educational setting.

#### Native American Students

A group that has had a tremendous struggle to adapt to the public school system is the Native Americans. "Their dropout rate is about 50 percent--the highest rate in the nation--and the median number of school years for adults is about nine (Chavers, D., 1991, p. 29).

The typical Indian student is taught in English although a native language is spoken in about 78 percent of their homes. Parents do not become involved in their children's education. Indeed there is a choice the student often has to make between choosing to do well in school and to move into the white man's world, or to do poorly and to continue to live with his family. This leads to a 70 percent unemployment rate of young Indians.

In Arizona, principal Bob Roundtree was able to turn these negative trends around in his high school. His seniors rose from 8th grade reading level in 1985 to 11th grade reading level in 1990. "There are no esoteric secrets involved in reaching and motivating

the culturally different Indian student. The simple things--more time on task, parent involvement and commitment, cultural sensitivity by teachers, lowering the absenteeism and tardiness rates--can get the job done" (Chavers, p. 29).

#### Black Students

In their book for Black parents Hopson and Hopson (1990) caution parents about what they will find in the public schools and encourage them to supplement the child's background with positive attitudes at home. They are especially concerned with the lack of positive images of Blacks in traditional literature. "Some of the most blatant and simplistic representations of white as good and of black as evil are found in children's literature" (p. 121). They suggest that parents alter basic fairy tales such as Cinderella by having Cinderella be a black character. They encourage the parents to choose books with positive Black images, and to read to their children as often as they can. This will build up positive buffer attitudes in the children so that they will be able to handle any negative influences that they will pick up in a world with many cultures.

Hobson and Hobson see a direct connection between a Black child's self-esteem, racial identity, and

academic achievement. They tell Black parents, "Simply put, the better your child feels about himself or herself as a Black person, the more likely he or she is to succeed in school." They also realize that integration is important for America to function with harmony. Cooperative learning teams, with both Black and White students working together to solve a problem could help each side see the other's strengths. However, it is still important for the Black child to strengthen his cultural roots through a positive home environment and extracurricular support.

This extension of the school into the home and community is important to Samuel Banks who advocates a multiethnic curriculum. In The Journal of Negro Education he claims five points for a successful multicultural curriculum:

1. Concentrate on the sensitization of total staff in terms of values.
2. Provide for in-depth training for all teachers in minority history and culture.
3. Utilize printed and multimedia materials that are multiethnic.
4. Develop teachers and teaching staffs that are biracial.

5. Establish a partnership with the total community (p. 88).

#### Mexican American Students

Adams and Anderson studied children from the Mexican-American culture and tried to see if the children's view of their school progress was different from the teacher's. They found to their surprise that even if the children were having difficulty reading, they did not perceive this difficulty. They had a more positive view of their performance than the teachers did. The authors did not know what to make of these findings. They felt that more studies should be made, and ". . . that uncritical acceptance of generalizations regarding students' perceptions of competence and teachers' perceptions is unwarranted" (p. 12). They recommended that more studies focusing on Mexican-American students be made.

In a more recent study by Lucas, Henze, & Donato (1990), the importance of positive attitudes in Mexican-Americans toward learning was verified by the students' success in high school. Their study followed six successful programs for Latino language-minority students, and the authors felt that, ". . . the most critical element in determining whether educators can work toward success for all students is the belief that

all students can succeed" (p. 318). Eight features of the six high schools that promoted the achievement of the language-minority students were:

1. Value is placed on the students' languages and cultures.

2. High expectations of language-minority students are made concrete.

3. School leaders make the education of language-minority students a priority.

4. Staff development is explicitly designed to help teachers and other staff serve language-minority students more effectively.

5. A variety of courses and programs for language minority students is offered.

6. A counseling program gives special attention to language minority students.

7. Parents of language-minority students are encouraged to become involved in their children's education.

8. School staff members share a strong commitment to empower language-minority students through education.

#### Asian Students

Another group represented in the American population is the Asian culture. Asian students are

usually viewed as industrious students and are usually not thought of as discipline problems. However, if they do have a problem, it is very important to be careful not to be too harsh in punishment; as the Southeast Asian family is tightly knit, and actions of its members reflect on the whole family. If a student shames his family at school, he will probably be severely punished at home. This "pride and shame" principle should be respected at school if teachers want to have good relations with the family (Morrow, 1991).

Similar to the Black and Hispanic cultures, the Asian student will do better in a school that respects his heritage. Some of the suggestions noted in Principal magazine for good relations with their Southeast Asian parents are to provide many times for teachers to learn cultural differences, develop a sense of trust, consider having native-speaking aides at the school, and ask the parents how they feel about American schools.

A survey in 1980 showed that the parents were generally satisfied with their children's education. "However, many also felt that schools in their native countries were more difficult than American schools, that their children were not getting enough homework,

that the schools were 'Americanizing' their children too quickly, that school discipline was too lax, and that there was a lack of respect for teachers by the students" (p. 22).

All of these cultural groups--Native American, Black, Hispanic, and Asian--have had success in school if the teachers, administrators, and school in general are sensitive to their particular culture. That their culture is valued makes them feel valued too and they will then join in and own a part of that system. They will participate and become literate. In my project I have found that a curriculum that works with the literature of various cultures enables the students, both minority and majority students alike, to respect and celebrate other cultures.

#### Whole Language

A whole language curriculum allows for the exploration of literature in many ways. Based on research in psycholinguistics, whole language seeks to work with the knowledge the child brings to school rather than forcing him to learn meaningless word combinations. Whole language works by concentrating on the meaning of the literature, not on sounding out words. Whole language seeks to build experience



schemas and images within the child rather than asking for memorization of grammar rules.

In a whole language environment children of many cultures and backgrounds can find positive examples of characters from their own and other cultures through the literature of many cultures.

These stories are read silently and aloud, and they are celebrated and dramatized. Children become involved in the stories and they respond to them by writing, acting, drawing, and creating.

Whole language allows for the affective domain to be emphasized in order for students to develop a positive attitude toward learning. Fredericks agrees that learning is influenced by non-cognitive factors many of which are found in the affective domain (Frederick, 1982). "Affective concerns, including interest, attitude, motivation, locus of control, self-concept, feelings, and emotions, are important to reading because they provide the desire and the will to read. When the reading program includes activities that lead to affective growth, teachers offer a greater chance for student success than if they emphasized only cognitive instruction" (p. 38).

Fredericks goes on to give ideas to help students develop a positive attitude towards reading. Some of

the ideas mentioned were to develop informal interest inventories, create different book reports with dioramas, collages, models and puppetry; and planning a program of skits, and oral presentations to celebrate what they have read.

### Folklore

One way students can celebrate a particular culture is by studying folklore and literature of that culture. The social values of a culture and the values displayed in their folklore are often the same. Indeed May Arbuthnot (1961) concludes in her comprehensive book on folklore that folklore itself grew out of the very being of the culture.

"In the light of their studies of modern folk societies, many anthropologists conclude that folk tales were the cement of society, the carriers of the moral code. The folk tales taught kindness, industry, and courage by dramatic stories revealing the rewards of these virtues. They showed meanness, laziness, and deceit exposed at last, and well punished. By creating these dramatic examples of good and bad behavior, properly rewarded or punished, they helped to cement society together with a common body of social and moral standards" (Arbuthnot, 1961, p. 3).

Some of the world's oldest stories come from India, but Egypt, Greece, Persia, and China also have ancient stories. Stories have traveled and they have changed as they have incorporated the ideas of their new culture. It is helpful for children to compare and contrast the folklore of a culture with their own culture.

Goodman and Melcher (1984) cover the issue of bringing a distant culture to the classroom by use of oral or written literature of the cultural group studied to gain "insight into its way of life" (p. 200). Children can learn about another culture by listening to folktales of that culture.

Goodman and Melcher say that the anthroliterary approach is useful in promoting understanding of others, understanding of self and active learning. Quoting Arbuthnot and Sutherland, they agree that folklore is sometimes called the Mirror of a people. It shows values that are the same among people as well as ideas that are different between cultures. It helps students to empathize with characters, and transports them to a different place and time. Folklore helps children create mental pictures and to speculate about outcomes. Goodman and Melcher express concern that teachers using folklore pay attention to the

authenticity of the information and avoid ethnocentric bias. They agree that social knowledge is changing and that the stories to use should be stories from collections by individuals having an "intimate knowledge of the culture and stories of the groups being studied" (p. 202). Avoiding ethnocentrism is somewhat harder to achieve. Most schools in the United States have been based on White upper-middle class ideals, and a denigrating attitude has been in existence toward hunting and agricultural societies. These attitudes make it hard to promote understanding in other cultures. Teachers should discuss these issues with the children and encourage students to express their ideas and how they are like a certain culture and different from that culture. This is called "Perspective consciousness" (p. 203) and "students need to develop the ability to project themselves into alternative perspectives" (p. 203).

In presenting a culture as an example, Goodman and Melcher chose the Ashanti of West Africa. Kwaku Anansi, a character who is sometimes a man, sometimes a spider, a trickster, and a rogue is used to teach morals through the folklore. Three goals were listed as part of the introduction: "to establish what the students already knew about the subject, to establish

what they would like to learn about the subject, and to arouse their interest and curiosity" (p. 203). The students then participated in discussion and made a web to choose what they wanted to study.

The authors then used an anthroliterary approach to take the children "through" the culture by use of literature. "An anthroliterary approach gave students an opportunity to learn from, interact with and expand upon the folklore of this culture. It was important for the students to listen to, read, discuss, and interpret meanings from the folktales" (p. 206). They also participated in creative activities such as making a drum and learning a code with which to send messages.

For evaluation Goodman and Melcher chose three evaluative activities suggested by Gertrude Herman (1968). First the students had a final discussion and redrew their web of ideas. Second, the students created dramatic plays based on themes that were illustrated in the folktales they had read. Third, the students chose from a list of topics learned in the unit and wrote a paper about their topic. The authors found that the use of literature from another culture gave the children a chance to understand people's commonalities and differences. Literature portrays the lifestyle, customs, and values of the culture it

represents. This is a better way for children to learn about a culture than merely memorizing facts.

Elementary school children can experience the positive effects of role-playing through multicultural storytelling and creative dramatics. They can immerse themselves in a fun way into another culture and view the values of that culture. Barry (1990) sees that the integration of multicultural literature into the reading curriculum can lead to five important outcomes:

1. Students learn that people are similar.
2. Students recognize the value of differences.
3. Students acquire an awareness of social issues affecting all of their lives.

4. Multicultural literature enriches the education of all students.

5. Multicultural literature helps our children build for a future world wherein they can know, understand, and respect each other so that the world will not be destroyed through war (Barry, 1990).

#### Availability of Multicultural Literature

Multicultural literature is thought to be valuable for children to help them learn about other cultures, and for minority students to learn about their own culture. However, the literature is still hard to come by.

I have been developing a multicultural collection for my branch library for over 15 years, and the hardest group to find books on is the Hispanic culture in English language books. This lack of books was discussed in several classes I have taken for the master's, and I was pleased to see that this need was addressed in a recent article in The Reading Teacher (Norton, 1990). ". . . there are fewer books in English about Hispanic cultures or the native cultures of Spanish-speaking regions, and the books that are available tend to go out of print rapidly" (Norton, 1990, p. 31). However, the Hispanic literature that is printed is not noted by Notable Children's Books in proportion to other cultures. Of the 67 titles mentioned on the Notable Children's book list, no Hispanic works were mentioned while seven black, and two Native American works were honored (Norton, 1990).

One reason given for the lack of Hispanic representation in children's literature is that the Hispanic culture is more complicated, tracing its roots to an infusing of Spanish, Jewish, Moorish, African, and many Indian cultures.

Norton has divided up the cultures into European, African, Native American, Hispanic, or Asian. She proposes a five phase plan for presenting the

literature of a culture to the students: (1) traditional literature--a general view; (2) traditional tales from one area; (3) autobiographies, biographies, and historical nonfiction; (4) historical fiction; and (5) contemporary fiction, biography, and poetry.

### Storytelling

Multicultural storytelling brings literature into a communal mode, where people share ideas together. People reaffirm their belonging to a community and their ideas of "rightness", and "truth" (Livo & Rietz, 1986). This idea of the communal quality of storytelling is confirmed by research of African authors. Indeed " . . . African traditional literature is the group's property . . . " (Ngwarsungu, 1990, p. 470). It is a " . . . functional literature because it serves social needs" (p. 470). By giving children multicultural literature, they become more aware of social values.

Storytelling evokes powerful images, but because of its framework, listeners feel protected. Children learn that there is a story truth apart from everyday reality. Stories also present cultural archetypes. McDonald's sourcebook of story motifs lists many recognizable and universal ideas such as stories about the moon as found in different cultures. Most motifs



cross cultures. Characteristics like humility, honesty and goodness are accounted. "Relationships between the characters, experiences, and events within the story are also designed to show the universality of our own circumstances and behavior" (Livo, & Rietz, 1986). Storytelling is an oral tradition and this tradition is kept alive through change. "The storyteller is best characterized as a medium through which a people can exercise the option to reshape and refine the literature and to make its structure and content consistent with a changing world view" (Livo & Rietz, 1986). Through the oral retelling of stories and creative dramatics, children can play with words aloud, and with this practice they will be able to choose a more natural sounding language for their own writing.

#### Defining Storytelling

Some authors are more strict in their terms than others. Livo and Rietz contend that "the story is a negotiated oral language production that is shaped by the immediate circumstances of the telling and that belongs to the audience" (p. 19). They do not consider story reading nor recitation of written literature as storytelling. I disagree. I feel that there are various levels of communicating a story to a group of children. Some of the levels of participation depend

on the preparation of the storyteller and others depend on the level of readiness for participation by the audience.

Most teachers and librarians simply do not have time to memorize stories for complete oral presentations. Instead of complete memorization, stories should be read several times to achieve a mental image of the story characters, and plot sequence, and then memorize only Key phrases.

The storyteller must especially pay attention to the phrases he wants the audience to say as they participate in the story. However, if the storyteller is not fully ready to repeat the story orally without a written book, I feel that it is all right to use the book as a prop. As the storyteller becomes more familiar with the story, and it becomes more a part of him, he can leave the book on the chalk tray.

I feel it is good for the children to see that the stories are in written form, too, and also that many of them are excellently illustrated. Storytelling then becomes a broader field. It is story retelling, it is oral reading, it is acting out stories, and it is a flexibility between oral language and the written word.

Although this definition is unacceptable to folklorists who expect storytellers to get their

stories only from the oral transmission of another storyteller, there are other accepted definitions to confirm my choice. A general definition from the World Book Encyclopedia has been used in library storytelling courses and workshops: "Storytelling as an art means recreating literature--taking the printed words in a book and giving them life (Green, p. 718).

Gerhardt in her study of The Thousand and One Nights (1963) also uses a broad definition of who is a storyteller: "those who created the stories, and those who repeated them, the narrators who worked them over, and the reactors who wrote them down, the compilers who collected them, and the translators who made them accessible in other languages" (p. 41).

The world of the storyteller is wide and encompasses many diverse backgrounds from religious, to the strict folklorist to the teacher and librarian who use both read-aloud stories, and oral narrations. With this wide diversity in mind, Anne Pellowski defines storytelling as ". . . the art or craft of narration of stories . . . before a live audience . . . with or without musical, pictorial, and/or other accompaniment, and may be learned from oral, printed or mechanically recorded sources. . ." (p. 15).

Some audiences are more ready to participate in storytelling, to respond to the predictable language of oral stories. As the storyteller becomes more at ease with a particular story, he can enjoy more eye contact with his audience and elicit more oral response from them.

### Children as Storytellers

Whole language advocate Constance Weaver (1988) encourages storytelling: "Teachers who know stories and can tell them well are empowered. Such strength can be passed on by teachers to students through the recurring invitational demonstration. Whole-language teachers help children become storytellers by sharing with them how they themselves came to love oral stories . . . . It also may be some children's entrance into the rich culture of other groups" (p. 243).

Nancy Schimmel in her book Just Enough to Make a Story talks about starting as a story teller (1978). Tellers may begin by reading books to the audience, but with phrasing, pace, and eye contact similar to telling the story without the book. It helps to rehearse the story first, and to practice reading it with the mind's view of the audience seeing and hearing it. Some tellers will show pictures with the stories, and others will leave the images to the listener's imagination.

Some stories are good to be used for audience participation and creative dramatics.

There is no one way to tell stories or to involve the children in creative dramatics. The storyteller is an individual, and what works for one may not work for another. However, most storytellers who wrote the books I researched agreed that the teller should choose a story that they like themselves and feel comfortable telling (Schimmel, N., 1978; Baker, A. & Green, E., 1987; Hamilton, M. & Weiss, M., 1990). Some stories are chosen for the plot, some for the point they make, and others for the language or characters. Whatever the reason, the storyteller needs to be involved in the story choice because he will be working with it for awhile, and if he does not like the story, the audience will know.

Most storytellers read over the stories they choose several times before they use it with a group. Some even tape the story so that they can hear themselves and make adjustments. Children can also learn to become storytellers, and they follow the same practice routine as adults. Some of the steps offered to help all storytellers are:

1. Read your story aloud many times.

2. Visualize your story by making an outline or story map of it.
3. Read your story into a tape recorder.
4. Learn the plot of your story so that you can tell it in your own words.
5. If there are important key phrases, memorize them.
6. Study the characters of the story and try to imagine what they look like.
7. If you want the audience to join in, encourage them by saying something like "Let's all say this," or "Let's try it together."
8. Practice the story to an imaginary audience, or tell it in front of the mirror.
9. Tell your story often. The more you tell it, the more it will become a part of you (Hamilton, M. & Weiss, M. (1990)).

Arbuthnot is more precise with her requirements for a storyteller. "Storytelling is an art that requires disciplines of many kinds, and one of these is the choice of words" (Arbuthnot, p. 654). She even goes into the use of voice projection and controlled breathing. She feels that the best way to tell a story is to forget oneself and to concentrate on the audience, but she remonstrates that this does not mean

sitting in a sloppy way. Do not fuss with jewelry, or use elaborate gestures. Her recommendations seem to be a list of "don'ts" rather than helping a person develop a good storytelling style.

#### Creative Dramatics

Creative dramatics can bring the story to life and help students experience the affective quality of good literature. "Creative drama is a short, structured dramatic play activity, wherein the emphasis is placed on the process, rather than on the product" (Chambers, 1970, p. 53).

Creative drama can fit into any classroom and enliven the literature. "The requirements of creative dramatics are few, consisting only of a group of children with a qualified leader and a space in which to function" (Menagh, 1967, p. 63). The material for the drama comes from the literature itself. In this way the children are exposed over and over to good literature. "Books become more real to children as they identify with the characters through creative dramatics. . . children play out the story as they 'believe' in the roles they assume" (Huck, C. S. & Kuhn, D. Y., 1968, p. 625).

Arbuthnot does give more leeway in her approach to turning storytelling into creative dramatics. "A class

discussion stimulates children to reflect on the personal characteristics of fictional characters and their motivations. But a child in a dramatic situation not only must understand the feelings, reactions, and motivations of the character he is playing but must convey them himself--with his voice, his face, and his body. Once the words of dialogue are spoken with understanding, they acquire a meaning far richer than any in the dictionary. Once those words are literally brought to life in a dramatization, a significant gap between the child and literature is bridged" (Arbuthnot, p. 678).

Children can start out by using pantomime and practicing body and facial expressions. Students can learn to tell a story through actions. Songs, rhythms and fingerplays wherein the children in the audience get a chance to use their voices are also a good warm-up exercises. When the students are ready, they can be walked through the motions of a story as the teacher tells it. My project uses this walk through creative dramatics. The students can respond at different stages of the story with their own words or use the words that they repeat from the storyteller. This gets the students involved immediately. Later, they can practice actions and present the story again.



They can also use a script for reader's theater, or they can write their own plays. Through the whole language approach, students can use many different forms to express the ideas of literature.

Although creative dramatics is a good starting point for involving children in the literature, it can also be used with some practice as an evaluation tool. "The way children respond to literature through art, drama, and music demonstrates their perceptions and interpretations" (Routman, 1988, p. 209).

In conclusion, the literature reviewed showed the necessity for teachers and staff to be sensitive to minority cultures in order for minority students to succeed in the school. The literature also showed that by involving children in stories from various cultures, the teller teaches them the values of those cultures.

The use of multicultural literature therefore helps both the minority students and the majority students. It helps the minority student see his culture as being valued, and it helps the majority student respect the ideas of another culture other than his own.

The whole language approach to literature is child-sensitive and meaning-centered. Its philosophy states that individual classrooms have different needs

and seeks to facilitate students' understanding in many ways. The vehicles of storytelling and creative dramatics are effective in involving children into multicultural literature. By celebrating many cultures, it is hoped that the children will create a future that respects other cultures both in the United States and throughout the world.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND LIMITATIONS

It is the intention of this project to offer suggestions for the implementation of an integrated curriculum wherein multicultural literature can be used to expand both the child's knowledge of language arts, and social studies. It is written from a whole language perspective.

### Goals

This project will take ten pieces of children's multicultural literature and present them in literature lessons. The literature lessons will be divided into pre-reading (Into), reading (Through), and post-reading (Beyond) activities. They will be like mini-thematic units in the fact that the lessons will use more than one piece of literature. They can be used individually by teachers and librarians as special story hours or as part of a multicultural unit.

The Into activities will be two-fold: (1) I will recommend various stories that can be used to introduce the main piece of literature; and (2) I will list ideas that can be used as part of the pre-reading discussion. One of the goals is for children to develop a pre-reading strategy and sense of what types of questions they can ask before reading any piece of literature. This will help them in the comprehension of stories.

The Through activities in my project will use creative dramatics to explore a piece of multicultural literature. I immediately involve the children in the story by using audience response and having some of the students act out or "walk through" the story as I read or tell it. The goal of this activity is to build a positive affective response within the children toward literature and reading. Another goal from the content area of social studies is that the students may become more aware of the various cultures in America and the world and through creative dramatics develop positive feelings and respect for many cultures.

The stories used in this project often have predictable language, rhythm, rhyme, and repetition of key phrases. They are natural to use for the goal of developing oral language and listening strategies.

The Beyond activities of this project will further allow the child to respond to the literature presented. Activities in writing, arts and crafts, and music will be encouraged. By discussing the literature in the post-reading session, students will generate new areas that they will want to explore. It is a goal of this project to encourage students to read on their own to find out the answers to their questions.

By using good literature as a model, students will develop literature appreciation and become familiar with the items that make up quality literature.

#### Objectives

After using these lessons the primary (K--Third grade) students will:

1. Develop a strategy for making predictions before they read a story.
2. Ask questions about the characters.
3. Ask questions about the setting.
4. Ask questions about how they would feel if they were in a particular setting or were a specific character.
5. Become able to approximate the story sequence through creative dramatics.
6. Be able to speak simple lines and use appropriate actions to tell a story.
7. Be able to see the relationship between the spoken word and the written word.
8. Develop further oral language through the literature discussion before and after the presentations.
9. Use the ideas learned from literature to enhance other areas of the curriculum. This project particularly seeks to develop a sense of respect for

many cultures as expressed in the social studies framework.

10. Develop an appreciation for good literature and the language, rhythm and rhyme of stories.

11. Develop a sense of enjoyment for literature whether it is read silently or aloud, or if it is told, or acted out.

12. Be able to act out or tell a simple story with expression, appropriate gestures, and facial expressions.

#### Limitations

This project is written with grades Kindergarten through third grade in mind. However I have used many of these stories, with some modifications, with older students with great success. These stories can also be used with bilingual groups with some adaptations. The enjoyment generated by storytelling, reading aloud and creative dramatics transmits over different ages and cultures.

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**APPENDIX**

## HANDBOOK FOR MULTICULTURAL STORY HOURS

"Mythology transforms, making the ordinary into the magical. It brings beauty to the ways of man, giving him dignity and expressing his joy in life. Folklore prepares man for adult life. It places him within his culture. With oral tradition retold through generations, the social group maintains its continuity, handing down its culture" (McDermott, 1972, p. 3).

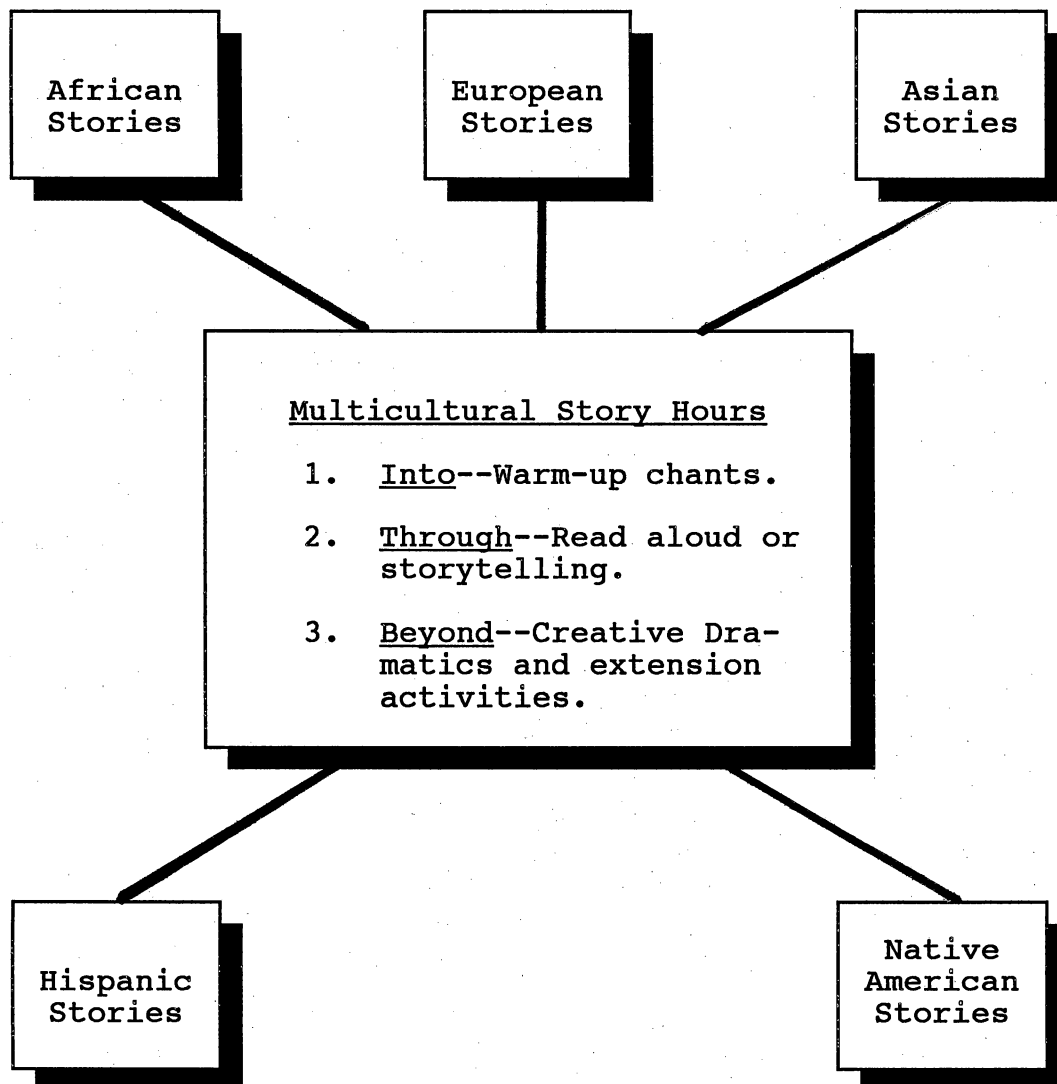
I have long enjoyed this view of storytelling as shown in the preface to Anansi the Spider. I further believe that literature ties people to their culture emotionally and helps them to participate vicariously with cultures of other times and places.

This handbook is the outgrowth of over twenty years of working with children's literature as a librarian and a teacher. In the many story hours that I have given I have tried to convey to the children the enthusiasm I feel towards books, and stories. Reading should be fun for children. I feel that by involving children in reading aloud, storytelling, and creative dramatics they can better remember the literature.

Children have their own hierarchy of what is important and what they will remember. It is always a delight to have a child come up to me in the supermarket, a restaurant or even at church and say,

"Do you remember me? I was the rabbit in the story we acted out," or, "You're the lady with the peanut butter song and the library stories."

#### Overview of Story Hour



The story hours in this handbook can be adapted for any of the elementary grades, but they are particularly put together for use in Kindergarten

through third grade. The English Language Arts Framework for California calls for a curriculum that will take the students "Into, Through, and Beyond" the literature. The story hours in this handbook will take the children "Into, Through, and Beyond" the literature of five different ethnic groups.

#### Into: Warm-up Exercises

Warm-up exercises are good for children of all ages, but are particularly useful for kindergartners as their attention span is shorter than the older students. The leader begins the chant or song, and the class joins in as they become familiar with the words. It is surprising how quickly children catch on!

These warm-up exercises help to accustom students to use their voices and move their hands in pantomime gestures. They will use similar actions when using creative dramatics for telling the stories.

#### Through: Read Aloud or Storytelling

In this section, I will give an example of a piece of literature from the particular ethnic group represented. The title of the selection can be written on the board along with the author and illustrator's names.



### Pre-story Discussion

The "Through" section continues with a pre-story discussion which pinpoints:

- \* Type of story
- \* Setting
- \* Story problem
- \* Characters

### Guidelines for Reading Aloud or Storytelling

1. Choose a story you like. Storytelling should be enjoyable, and if you like the story, the children will catch your enthusiasm.

2. Practice reading it aloud. Read to yourself, your family, your pets, or anyone. Let the story become a part of you.

3. Practice making mental pictures of the story's characters, setting and action.

4. Practice telling it without the book. You can make cue cards, but it is more important to present the sequence and spirit of the story than to know it word for word.

5. Have fun with the story you have chosen!

### Beyond: Creative Dramatics and Follow up Activities

#### Creative dramatics

I always try to immerse the children right into the action of the story. Creative dramatics helps me

to do this. My particular type of creative dramatics I call "walk-through dramatics" because I help the students as the story goes along. You can work with them to choose an action that will suit the plot and character. You can tell the student his line, and he repeats the line, adding his own personality to it.

The stage is usually a narrow strip of floor in front of the class, or in front of the seated children. Props are not needed, but a few simple ones can be fun and add to the storytelling.

The basic requirement is for the children to have fun acting out a story. When you use your favorite stories, you will find that you will also have fun.

#### Follow up Activities

In this handbook, ideas for a follow-up discussion of a particular story will be noted. The follow-up discussion will be different with each group and with each enactment of the various stories.

It is in the Beyond activities that various arts and crafts can be developed. Creative, and factual writing can be accomplished. Games can be played, dances learned and further literature of a theme can be used. I will list several follow-up activities I have used, or have seen used successfully. However, this is

the time when your own imagination and enthusiasm can take wings and fly.

#### Warm-up Chants, Songs and Fingerplays

Most of the chants, songs and fingerplays noted here are traditional and are not attributed to a single author. I have found some of them listed in various books and tapes and will note them in the Warm-up References.

#### The Peanut Butter Chant

CHORUS: Peanut, Peanut Butter, Jelly

Peanut, Peanut Butter, Jelly

(Move both hands to the left on Peanut.

Move both hands to the right on Jelly.)

First you take the peanuts and you smash 'em, you smash' em

First you take the peanuts and you smash' em, you smash' em

(Clap hands together.)

CHORUS: Peanut, Peanut Butter, Jelly

Peanut, Peanut Butter, Jelly

Then you take the grapes and you squish 'em, squish 'em

Then you take the grapes and you squish 'em, squish 'em

(Put hands together and turn one upon the other.)

CHORUS: Peanut, Peanut Butter, Jelly

Peanut, Peanut Butter, Jelly

Then you take the bread and spread it, spread it.

Then you take the bread and spread it, spread it.

(Use your right hand in a spreading motion over your left hand.)

CHORUS: Peanut, Peanut Butter, Jelly

Peanut, Peanut Butter, Jelly

Then you take the sandwich and you eat it, eat it.

Then you take the sandwich and you eat it, eat it.

(Start singing Peanut, Peanut Butter, but with your mouth closed because the peanut butter is making it sticky (Bauer, 1987, p. 16).)

#### My Name Is Sew

Begin chanting and ask your children to join you with words and actions as soon as they catch the rhythm:

Hi

My name is Sew

and I work in a button factory

I have a wife and two kids,

one day my boss says to me,

"Are you busy, Sew?"

I say, "No."

"Then push this button with your

RIGHT HAND."

(Push with your right hand as you chant again.)

Hi

My name is Sew  
and I work in a button factory  
I have a wife and two kids,  
one day my boss says to me,  
"Are you busy, Sew?"

I say, "No."

"Then push this button with your

RIGHT HAND."

(Continue pushing with both hands as you chant again.)

Hi

My name is Sew  
and I work in a button factory  
I have a wife and two kids,  
one day my boss says to me,  
"Are you busy, Sew?"

I say, "No."

"Then push this button with your

RIGHT FOOT."

(Continue pushing with both hands and your right foot  
as you chant again.)

Hi

My name is Sew

and I work in a button factory

I have a wife and two kids,

one day my boss says to me,

"Are you busy, Sew?"

I say, "No."

"Then push this button with your

LEFT FOOT."

(Continue pushing with both legs and both hands as you chant again.)

Hi

My name is Sew,

and I work in a button factory

I have a wife and two kids,

one day my boss says to me,

"Are you busy, Sew?"

I say, "No."

"Then push this button with your

HEAD."

(Continue pushing with both hands, both feet, and your head as you chant again.)

Hi

My name is Sew

and I work in a button factory

I have a wife and two kids,

one day my boss says to me,

"Are you busy, Sew?"

I say, "Yes!" (Bauer, 1987, p. 17-19).

The Crocodile Song

(Traditional)

She sailed away on a bright and sunny day

On the back of a crocodile.

"You see," said she, "He's as tame as he can be,

I'll ride him down the Nile."

But the croc winked his eye

As she waved them all goodbye,

Wearing a great big smile.

At the end of the ride, the lady was inside,

With the smile on the crocodi-i-ile!

(In the beginning have the children make a snapping crocodile with their left hand fingers and thumb. Use the index finger of the right hand as a little lady. Put the lady on the crocodile. Move your hands in a sailing motion. At the end of the song the right hand is flat of the left hand. Open and shut the hands like a crocodile mouth.)

La Arana Pequena/Itsy Bitsy Spider

La Arana Pegrenita

Subio, subio, subio.

Vino la lluvia y se la llevo

Salio el sol y todo lo seco

Y la arana pequenita subio, subio, subio.

The itsy bitsy spider

Went up the water spout

Down came the rain

And washed the spider out.

Out came the sun and dried up all the rain,

And the itsy, bitsy spider went up the spout again.

(Peralta, 1985)

Rima De Chocolate

Uno, dos, tres, cho-

Uno, dos, tres, -co-

Uno, dos, tres, -la-

Uno, dos, tres, -te-

Bate, bate chocolate

Chocolate Rhyme

One, two, three, cho-

One, two, three, -co-

One, two, three, -la-

One, two, three, -te-

Stir, stir the chocolate

(Griego, Bucks, Gilbert, & Kimball (1981).



Warm-up References

Bauer, C. F. (1987). Presenting reader's theater.

New York: H. W. Wilson.

Griego, M., Bucks, B. L., Gilbert, S. S., & Kimball, L.

H. (1981). Tortillitas para mama. New York: Henry Holt.

Peralta, C. (1981). Flannelboard activities for the

bilingual classroom. New York: Scribner.

Raffi, & Simpson, B. (1980). The Raffi singable

songbook. New York: Crown.

## African Stories and Folktales

### Into

\* Choose a one or two warm-up chants, songs, fingerplays, or poems.

\* Discuss the students' ideas about stories from Africa.

### Through

\* Choose a story to read aloud, or tell it without the book.

There are many stories from Africa that are good to use with the primary grades for reading aloud, storytelling, and creative dramatics. Here is a list of quality books I have used over the years in a mini-theme unit of African Folklore.

### Story Example:

A Story A Story retold and illustrated by Gail Haley.

African societies have long had the tradition of oral traditions. Some storytellers travel from town to town with an ornate net decorated with items that they use to help them remember stories. A person can choose an item and then the storyteller will tell a story using the item as a memory touchstone.

If I were to choose a symbol as a touchstone for African folklore, it would be a spider. Ananse the

spider, or Kwaku Ananse is a hero well known in African folklore. Sometimes Ananse appears as a spider, and sometimes he appears as a man.

In A Story A Story by Gail E. Haley, Ananse appears as an old man who wants stories for his people.

Pre-story discussion.

Type of story: A folktale and a creation story.

Setting: West Africa.

Story problem: Ananse must bring the sky god three creatures in order to obtain the box of stories.

Characters: Ananse the spiderman, Nyame the sky god, Osebo the leopard with terrible teeth, Mmboro the hornets that sting like fire, and Mmoatia the fairy that no one ever sees.

Reading aloud.

This book was awarded the Caldecott Medal for its art, and it is delightful to share its rich art with the children. This book has many editions, and some of the older ones are larger and therefore better for sharing with a class.

Storytelling.

A Story A Story has memorable language, and it is easy to memorize key phrases after several readings.

Some key points to remember are:

1. Once, oh, small children round my knee, there were no stories on earth.

2. All stories belonged to Nyame, the Sky God.

3. Ananse asks Nyame for the stories.

4. The price of the stories is that Ananse must bring Nyame three things:

\* Osebo, the leopard, with terrible teeth;

\* Mmboro, the hornets, who-sting-like-fire;

and--

\* Mmoatia, the fairy, whom-men-never-see.

5. Ananse asks the Osebo the leopard to play the binding-binding game, and after Osebo agrees, Ananse ties him up for the Sky God.

6. Ananse empties water on a banana leaf and tells Mmboro, the hornets, that it is raining. They fly into his gourd so their wings will not get tattered.

7. Ananse takes a wooden doll covered with gum and a dish of yams out to the flamboyant tree. When Mmoatia the fairy sees the doll and yams, she eats the yams and thanks the doll. The doll does not answer.

8. The fairy hits the doll in her crying place, and she sticks to the doll. Ananse picks her up.

9. Ananse takes Osebo, the leopard, with terrible teeth; Mmboro, the hornets, that sting-like-fire; and Mmoatia, the fairy, whom-men-never-see, to the Sky God.

10. Nyame gives Ananse the stories and tells everyone that now until forever these stories shall be called spider stories.

11. Ananse carries the box of stories down the spider web, and as he does the box falls, and the stories fall all over the earth.

#### Discussion questions.

1. How would you feel if you were Ananse and had to find the items for Nyame before you could get the stories?

2. Which item do you feel was the hardest to get? Why?

3. What did Ananse use to help him get Osebo, Mmboro, & Mmoatia?

4. How would you feel if you had succeeded and could pay Nyame the price he asked for his stories?

5. What happened to the stories? Can you think of another way that we could have gotten stories?

#### Beyond

In this handbook I am using walk-through creative dramatics as the main storytelling process for the Beyond activities. I have found that most students

eagerly raise their hands and want to be involved. If a child is shy after he is in front of the group, I have the audience help him by saying his lines together as a group.

Example:

Who's in Rabbit's House,

Retold by Verna Aardema. Dial, 1977.

Illustrators: Diane and Leo Dillon

Pre-story discussion.

1. Type of story: This is a fable, and the animals walk and talk like people. With the older children (fourth grade) I have discussed "Personification." Both older and younger children can discuss:

"How would you act and feel if you were an elephant?"

"How are elephants like people?"

2. Setting and plot: The story takes place in the grassland of East Africa. This can be used as part of a larger thematic unit on Africa and a background can be painted by the children.

Instead of plot, I have discussed with children what they think is the problem of the story.

I have also asked them, "What would you do if you came home and couldn't get in your house?" "How would you feel?"

3. Characters: List the characters on the board and discuss their characteristics. Ask the children to think about the animal's physical appearance. How does an animal's physical appearance limit him? How would they feel if they were a particular animal: Rabbit, Frog, Jackal, Leopard, Elephant, Rhinoceros?

Creative dramatics.

\* Ask for volunteers for the various characters.

\* Have them line up on the actor's right stage, with rabbit in front. You are ready to begin the action:

1. Have rabbit walk to the middle of the stage area and try to get in the imaginary house.

2. Say rabbit's lines and have the student repeat them with expression: "Who's in my house?"

3. Teacher responds in a loud voice, "I am the long one. I eat trees and trample on elephants. Go away, or I will trample you!"

4. Rabbit sits down on a chair on center stage, and cries.

5. Frog comes up to rabbit, "What's wrong rabbit?"

6. Rabbit, "Someone's in my house."

7. Frog, "Who's in rabbit's house?"

8. Have the children in the audience join in, "I am the long one. I eat trees and trample on elephants. Go away, or I will trample you!"

9. Frog says, "Maybe I can help if I think awhile." But rabbit is impatient and says, "Go away, you're no help." Frog moves to rabbit's left hand side.

10. Each of the other animals move up to rabbit one by one. You say their lines and have the student actor repeat them, and perform a simple pantomime of action. They then move to rabbit's left side where there is an imaginary lake.

11. Frog comes back after the others have failed, and asks rabbit for a chance to get rid of the long one.

12. Frog cups his hands around his mouth. You say the words and have Frog repeat them in a very loud voice, "I am the spitting cobra! Come out of the house, or I'll crawl under the door and spit poison in your eyes!"

13. Tap five children on the heads, have them get up and join hands. Ask the children, "Who do you think the Long One was? It was a caterpillar." Weave around the story area with the children who are the



caterpillar, saying, "Help! Save me from the spitting cobra!"

14. Ask the children, "How did Frog get rid of the Long One? By using his head."

Ending.

\* Have the children who acted all take a bow, and the audience applaud.

\* Follow with a discussion.

Follow up activities.

There is a rich variety of Beyond activities that will review the important points for the student and take them beyond the main literature selection. Some activities that students can do are:

\* Write a fable.

\* Make up an oral story and record it in the tape recorder.

\* Interview family members and have them tell a story that they remember from childhood into a tape recorder.

\* Make African designs on potatoes and use them with fabric paint to make a cloth that can be draped on the actors for a performance for the parents.

\* Listen to African music and choose music to be used as background for a performance.

\* Learn an African dance to use as part of the performance.

\* List things they know about African folktales and compare the list to the list they made in the pre-reading or Into section.

\* List types of African stories they would like to read.

\* Read a story from the book list at home with their parents.

\* Make a finished production of Creative Dramatics and invite parents to the performance.

## African Story References

- Aardema, V. (1981). Bringing the rain to Kapiti Plain. New York: Dial Books.
- Aardema, V. (1977). Who's in rabbit's house? New York: Dial Press.
- Aardema, V. (1975). Why mosquitoes buzz in people's ears: A West African tale. New York: Dial Books.
- Dayrell, E. (1968). Why the sun and moon live in the sky. Boston: Houghton.
- Haley, G. E. (1970). A story a story. New York: Athenium.
- McDermott, G. (1972). Anansi the spider: A tale from the Ashanti. New York: Holt.
- Steptoe, J. (1987). Mufaro's beautiful daughters. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.

## European Stories and Folktales

### Into: Warm-Ups

- \* Choose one or two songs, poems, chants or fingerplays as a warm-up.
- \* Discuss what type of stories the children think come from Europe.

### Through

- \* Choose a story from the book list to read aloud or to tell orally.

#### Example:

Caps for Sale by Esphyr Slobodkina, Harper, 1947.

The story I have chosen for illustration is Caps for Sale by E. Sloblokin. Sloblokin is from Russia and the peddler looks like a villager. This story reflects a good sense of humor. It is also full of memorable language and repetitive phrases so that it is easy to memorize. It can also be acted out easily.

#### Reading aloud.

Encourage the children to respond out loud in the role of the peddler and the monkeys.

#### Storytelling.

This is a simple story and the lines are repetitive. The plot is:

1. A peddler with caps stacked on his head walks through the town crying, "Caps, caps for sale. Fifty cents a cap."
2. He is tired; so, he goes out of town, and sits down under a tree. He falls asleep.
3. When he wakes up, his caps are missing. He looks all around. No caps.
4. Finally he looks up into the tree and sees monkeys with his caps on their heads.
5. He shakes his finger at the monkeys and says, "You monkeys, you! Give me back my caps."
6. The monkeys look at him, shake their fingers and say, "Tss tss tss tss tss!"
7. He shakes both fists, and says, "You monkeys, you! Give me back my caps!"
8. The monkeys shake both fists and say, "Tss tss tss tss tss!"
9. The Peddler stamps his foot and says, "You monkeys, you! Give me back my caps!"
10. The monkeys stamp their feet and say, "Tss tss tss tss tss!"
11. The peddler jumps with both feet and says, "You monkeys, you! Give me back my caps!"
12. The monkeys jump with both feet and say, "Tss, tss tss tss."

13. The peddler is so mad he throws his own cap on the ground.

14. The monkeys throw their caps to the ground, too.

15. The Peddler picks up the caps, stacks them on his head and walks back into town crying, "Caps, caps for sale. Fifty cents a cap."

Discussion questions.

1. How would you feel if you were the peddler woke up to find the caps were missing?

2. Could you think of another way the peddler could have gotten his caps back?

3. People sometimes imitate another person's actions. When is imitation good? When is it bad?

4. Pretend you are the peddler, coming back into town. How would you tell other people about the monkeys?

Beyond: Creative Dramatics

The children are often well acquainted with Grimm's fairy tales, the stories of Perrault, and other traditional stories from Europe. It is easy to find several stories that they can act out immediately. The main worry here is that they are so familiar with the stories that they tend to be sloppy and to race through.

The children should be reminded that when they are on stage, they are presenting a story for others to enjoy. They should do their best to tell it well. That means having appropriate gestures for their character, saying their lines as clearly as possible, and being attentive to the audience.

Example: Three Billy Goats Gruff.

Any of the basic, familiar fairy tales can be used here. I usually use two or three of them so more children can participate.

Stories:

Three Little Pigs,

Goldilocks and the Three Bears,

Sleeping Beauty,

Hansel and Gretel,

Rumpelstiltskin.

I will use Three Billy Goats Gruff.

Pre-acting discussion.

1. Characters: The Little Billy Goat, The Middle Billy Goat, The Big Billy Goat, and The Troll.

Discuss how the characters would sound; how they would move.

2. Setting: There are two hills--one with grass, one without grass. The goats live on the hill without grass.

There is a bridge crossing the deep river that separates the two hills. The troll lives under the bridge.

3. Type of story: Fairy tale.

4. Story Problem: The children can easily see that the goats must get to the sweet grass by crossing the bridge where the troll lives.

Some questions could be:

\* How do you feel when you have to see some one you do not like in order to get something you want?

\* How would you feel if you were the little goat; . . . the middle goat . . . the big goat?

\* How would you feel if you were the troll?

Acting set-up.

\* Ask for volunteers for the parts.

\* Have a large chair or a small table for the bridge.

\* Have the children acting out the goats line up on one side of the bridge.

\* Have the troll duck behind the bridge.

Acting out.

1. Have the "goats" come up and kneel on the "bridge," one at a time.



2. Each time they start trip, tripping on the bridge, have the troll jump out and say, "Who's that tripping on my bridge?"

3. Each goat answers who he is.

4. Have the troll growl, "I'm going to eat you up!"

5. The little one and the middle one will tell him to wait for a bigger goat.

6. The bigger one will duck his head and push the troll.

7. Here you will have to monitor the action to see that it doesn't get too rough.

Ending. Have the actors take a bow and the audience applaud.

#### Follow-up Activities

The first Beyond activity could be a discussion of the similarities and differences between African and European folk tales. Both Who's in Rabbit's House? and The Three Billy Goats Gruff have the animals walk and talk as in fables. Both stories have the smaller defenseless animals out witting the bully. However, The Three Billy Goats Gruff ultimately uses force over the troll whereas Who's in Rabbit's House? stops with the use of brain over brawn. A discussion could center on the question of whether or not force is necessary at

times. What does this comparison say about the values of the two cultures?

Most children are familiar with castles, princesses, princes, and good and evil fairies from the fairy tales that their parents have read to them. There are many fun activities that you can use to extend the learning from the literature.

Some creative activities you might have the students do are:

- \* Make a "gingerbread" house out of graham crackers and frosting.

- \* Make puppets for acting out a familiar fairy tale.

- \* Choose a book from the book list and have them read it with their parents.

- \* Write a fairy tale in a modern setting.

- \* Write how their life would be if they lived long ago.

- \* Have them make jewelry as they would wear if they were kings and queens. Compare it with the beautiful jewelry that wealthy Africans had made.

- \* Make a list of things they have learned about European fairy tales. Compare the list to the pre-reading list.

References of European Stories

(Most of these books are taken from the California State Recommended Readings in Literature.)

Brown, M. (1947). Stone soup. New York: Scribner.

Brown, M. & Perrault, C. (1954). Cinderella.

New York: Scribner.

DePaola, T. (1975). Strega Nona. Englewood Cliffs,

NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Galdone, P. (1982). Jack and the beanstalk.

New York: Clarion.

Galdone, P. (1973). The three bears. New York:

Scholastic.

Galdone, P. (1981). The three billy goats Gruff.

New York: Clarion.

Grimm, J., & Grimm. (1980). The Bremen town musi-

cians. New York: Doubleday.

Grimm, J., & Grimm, W. (1983). Little Red Riding Hood

(T. S. Hyman, edition). New York: Holiday House.

Grimm, J., & Grimm, W. (1982). The shoemaker and the

elves. New York: Scribner.

Grimm, J., & Grimm, W. (1972). Snow White and the

seven dwarfs. New York: Farrar.

The Sleeping Beauty by the Brothers Grimm (T. S. Hyman

edition). New York: Little.

## Asian Stories and Folktales

### Into: Warm-up Exercises

\* Choose one or two chants, songs, or fingerplays to warm-up.

### Through

\* Choose a story as a through activity for reading aloud or storytelling.

Example: Lon Po Po

The story I have chosen here is Lon Po Po, retold and illustrated by Ed Young. Mr. Young has several beautiful picture books that are very powerful with young children, (Moontiger, The Eye of the Dragon, I Wish I Were a Butterfly, and others).

Lon Po Po is the Chinese version of Little Red Riding Hood.

### Pre-story discussion.

1. Setting: A house in China with a big ginseng tree nearby. Discuss what a ginseng tree might look like and what the fruit might taste like.

2. Style: This is a fairy tale. The wolf walks and talks like a human.

3. Story Problem: How to get rid of the wolf.

4. Characters: The mother, the three daughters, and the wolf. What type of character is the wolf?

What is he after? Do you think someone will outsmart the wolf? Who?

After reading the story, ask the children if the story turned out as they thought it would. How would they behave if a dangerous stranger visited their house in disguise.

Discuss how this story is like Red Riding Hood and how is it different.

### Beyond

The story I have chosen for creative dramatics is The Five Chinese Brothers. I was impressed with the memorable language of this story long ago when my daughter came home from first grade and told the whole story to me from memory after hearing it told once. She even bowed and said, "Honorable sir, may I please go home and say goodbye to my mother?"

There is a new version, The Seven Chinese Brothers, which has excellent drawings. It meets with more approval from the Chinese community, because in the drawings the people are not yellow as in the first edition. Also, the words, "they all looked alike," when referring to the brothers, are not used. I delete those word as I am telling the story.

Set Up

\* Setting: Three or four chinese fans held up on the sides of the stage area help to provide an Asian atmosphere. This also involves more children.

\* Characters: Five brothers, their mother, a judge, and a little boy.

Action:

Have the five brothers and their mother line up on the actors right side of the stage. Tell their characteristics and each one bow:

1. The first could swallow the sea.
2. The second had an iron neck.
3. The third had legs that could stretch.
4. The fourth could not be burned.
5. The fifth could breathe anywhere.

Once upon a time the first brother went out to the sea. He swallowed it and went about picking up treasures he could find on the ocean bottom. When he was finished, he opened his mouth and let the sea out.

\* A boy saw him doing this and begged to come the next time. (Have boy enter and beg.)

\* The first brother agreed, but he made the boy promise he would come when he waved to him.

\* The First brother swallowed the sea, and the boy ran around picking up items. (Have boy pick up imaginary items.)

\* The brother gestures, and the boy does not come. The sea comes out of the brother's mouth and drowns the boy.

\* The brother is brought before the judge. (Have the judge on the actors left side.)

\* The judge commands that the brother have his head chopped off.

\* The brother says, "Honorable sir, may I please go home and say goodbye to my mother?"

\* The judge says, "It is only right for you to do so." The first brother goes home, and the second one comes back in his place.

\* They try to chop off the second brothers head, but they cannot; so, the judge commands that he be thrown into the deepest part of the sea.

\* The second brother says, "Honorable sir, may I please go home and say goodbye to my mother?"

\* The judge says, "It is only right that you should do so." The second brother goes home, and the third brother comes back in his place.

\* This sequence continues through each of the brothers. Each one is saved by the following brother.

At last the judge proclaims: Enough is enough! We have tried to punish this man, and he is still alive. This must be the will of the gods. Let him go home to live with his mother."

Follow-up Activities:

\* Compare the folktales from various Asian cultures to each other.

\* Compare the Asian folktales to those from Africa and Europe.

\* Make a scroll painting, a paper lantern, or a fan.

\* Discuss what was the same and what was different in the stories from Asia compared to the students own lives.

\* Have the students write their own Asian story, using the stories above or on the Book list as models.

\* Have the students choose a book from the book list and read it to their parents. Younger students can have the parent read to them.

\* Have the students write a journal as if they were visiting China or Japan.



## Booklist for Asian Folklore and literature

- Baker, K. (1989). The magic fan. San Diego: Harcourt  
Brace Jovanovich.
- Byrant, S. C. (1963) The burning rice fields.  
New York: Holt.
- Hodges, M. (1964). The wave. Houghton: Boston.
- Leaf, M. (1987). Eyes of the dragon. New York:  
Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.
- Louie, A. (1982). Yen Shen: A Cinderella story from  
China. New York: Philomel.
- Morsel, A. (1972). The funny little woman. New York:  
Dutton.
- Motomora, M. (1989). Momotaro. Milwaukee: Raintree.
- Thong, L. T. (1977). Popular stories from Vietnam.  
San Diego: Institute for Cultural Pluralism.
- Turner, A. (1990). Through moon and stars and night  
skies. New York: Harper & Row.
- Uchida, Yoshiko. (1955). The magic listening cap:  
More folktales from Japan. New York: Harcourt.
- Uchida, Yoshiko. (1965). Sea of gold and other tales  
from Japan. New York: Scribner.

### Hispanic Stories and Folktales

There is no one Hispanic Culture, but rather many cultures that are related to each other largely because they speak Spanish. Many of the students come from homes where Spanish is the first language and English is a second language.

This makes for interesting combinations of printed material. There are few bilingual books. There are some Spanish translations of the English books such as Scholastic's Clifford books in Spanish, and Rigby's Big Books. And there are some Spanish books from Mexico. There are not many English books with Hispanic characters, which would be nice so that other cultures can learn about different Hispanic cultures.

In my warm-up poems, I have included the Itsy, Bitsy Spider in English and in Spanish. I am shy about reading in Spanish but I still try because I have had such enthusiastic results from the bi-lingual students. They volunteer to help me and they aren't bothered by my accent. Some of the sweetest words I have ever heard were "¡Otra Vez!" (Another Time) when we finished acting out a bilingual Three Billy Goats Gruff, Los Tres Chivos Vivos by Smith and Parkes (1989).

Into

\* Choose some warm-up poems, songs, chants, or fingerplays.

\* Use poems from bilingual books like Arroz con Leche by Lulu Delacre.

Naranja dulce  
Naranja dulce,  
limon partido,  
dame un abrazo  
que yo te pido.  
Si fuera falso  
mi juramento,  
en poco tiempo  
se olvidara.

Toca la marcha  
mi pecho llora;  
adios, senora,  
yo ya me voy.

--Mexico

Orange so Sweet  
 Orange so sweet  
 A lemon slice, love,  
 I'm asking you for  
 A hug tonight, love.

If I forsake you  
While I'm away, dear,  
Then please forget me  
Forevermore.

Strike up the music  
Let it play on, dear,  
My poor heart's broken  
Dear love, farewell

(Delacre, L., 1989, p. 10-11).

Through

Example: Flannel Board Story--La Mariposa.

Once there was a butterfly, a Mariposa, who was cleaning her house. As she was sweeping, she found some money, dinero. She wondered what she should buy with her new found wealth.

First she thought she would buy some makeup. Then she said, "No, Que me llaman coquetta. They'll say I'm a big flirt if I do that."

Then she thought she would buy some candy. "No, que me llaman golosa. They'll say I've got a sweet tooth."

Finally she decided to buy some cloth to make a new dress. She found some beautiful yellow cloth with black dots and took it home and made a new dress and put it on.

Well, you know how good you feel when you have new clothes on. That is how she felt. She wished someone would see her in her new clothes; so, she went out on her front porch.

Soon she saw someone coming down the street. He went Snort, snort, snort. It was Señor Marrano--the pig. He saw the Mariposa and thought she looked beautiful. He said, "¡Mariposa, Mariposa, que guapita que estas! Mariposa, how beautiful you are!"

"Lo se que, lo se que no me lo das. I know that, I know that. You don't have to tell me that," she replied.

"¿Mariposa, Mariposa, que tú casas connigo? Mariposa, Mariposa will you marry me?" said Señor Marrono.

And she told him, "¿Como me cantarás, si caso contigo? How would you sing for me?"

The pig sang snort, snort, snort.

"Oooh. Que me asustaras. You would scare me." And the pig went off crying oink, oink, oink.

In a little while someone else came down the street. He went pant, pant, pant. It was Señor Perro--the dog. He said, "¡Mariposa, Mariposa, que guapita que estas! How beautiful you are!"

She told him, "Lo se que, lo se que tú no me los das. I know that. You don't have to tell me that."

The dog wanted to marry her, too. "¿Mariposa, Mariposa, que tú casas conmigo?"

And she told him, "¿Como me cantarás, si caso contigo? How would you sing for me?" The dog sang howl, howl, howl.

"Ooooh. Que me asustarás. You would scare me with that!" and the dog ran down the street crying-- arw, arw, arw.

Then someone else came down the street. Meow, Meow--it was Señor Gato, the cat. "Mariposa, Mariposa, que guapita que estas."

"Lo se que, lo se que no me lo das."

"¿Mariposa, Mariposa que tú casas conmigo?"

"¿Como me cantarás si caso contigo?" The cat began to sing--meeeeooooow, meeeeeooooow.

"Ooooh. Que me asustarás. You would scare me!" But the cat did not run crying down the street. He walked off around the house and saw an open window. He jumped inside and curled up under the bed where it was warm and went to sleep.

Then someone else came down the street. He could not make much of a sound, just squeak, squeak, squeak. It was ratoncito--the mouse.

"Mariposa, Mariposa. ¡Que guapita que estas!"

Lo se que, lo se que no me lo das."

"¿Mariposa, Mariposa, que te casas conmigo?"

"¿Como cantaras si caso contigo?" And the mouse began to sing--squeak, squeak, squeak.

"Ooooh, what a beautiful sound. ¡Si, yo voy a casarme contigo!" So they went down to the church and were married. But by that time it was very late in the day, and by the time they got home it was late, late in the night, and they were sleepy. They went right to bed.

Later, mouse was thirsty. He got up to get a drink of water, but he did not come back to bed. La Mariposa called out, "¿Ratoncito, que no subes ya? Aren't you getting back in bed yet?" And she fell back to sleep.

She woke up after a while and he still had not come back to bed. She called out louder, "¿Ratoncito, que no subes ya? Aren't you coming back to bed yet?" And she fell back to sleep.

Finally when it was almost morning she cried out again, "¡Ratoncito, Ratoncito, que no subes ya! ¿Donde esta me corazon?"

From under the bed (remember who was under the bed?) she heard, "Meeoow--En mi tripo el esta." The cat had eaten the mouse.

La Mariposa was heartbroken. Fue muy triste. She cried and cried, and all her friends felt sorry for her. They brought her flowers to cheer her up. She liked those flowers so well that she forgot about living in a house and being married, and she spent her days flying from flower to flower. In fact she still does fly from flower to flower. Have you seen her? (Hayes, 1984).

### Beyond

The story I have chosen for creative dramatics is The Riddle of the Drum retold by Verna Aardema and illustrated by Tony Chen.

Setting: Tizapan, Mexico.

- \* Look at a map or globe to find Tizapan.
- \* Discuss what kind of climate they would have.
- \* Discuss what kind of plants would grow there.

### Story problem

The prince must guess the riddle of the drum in order to marry Princess Fruela. After he has guessed correctly, he has to complete two more tests thought up by the King.



### Props

\* Stretch black plastic from a new garbage bag over a large butter tub or coffee can to make a drum.

\* You can have cowboy hats or sombreros for the Prince and his helpers.

\* For a more elaborate production you can banners both in the palace area and along with the Prince's retinue.

### Characters

\* Choose 9 students for the following roles:

King of Tizapan (Tee-sah-PAHN), Mexico;

Princess Fruela (Froo-AY-lah);

Prince Tuzan (Too-SAHN);

Corrin Corran (Cor-REEN, Cor-RAHN), the runner;

Tirin Taran (Tee-REEN, Tee-RAHN), the archer;

Oyin Oyan (Oh-YEEN Oy-YAHN), the hearer;

Soplin Soplan (So-PLEEN So-PLAHN), the blower;

Comin Coman (Co-MEEN Co-MAHN), the eater;

The witch.

\* Have the King and Fruela stand on one side of the stage area.

\* Have the Prince's helpers line up on the other side of the stage with the Prince at the end of the

line. As he meets the helpers, he goes up the line until he is near center stage.

Action

\* The King presents a drum and a riddle for the suitors of his daughter. "Rum-pum-pum the head of the drum-pum-pum. Guess what it's made from-te-dum and marry the princess Fruela."

\* Prince Tuzan hears about the beautiful princess and starts on a journey to the palace.

\* He meets Corrin Corran who is running in place.

Prince: "Who are you?"

Corrin Corran: "I am the runner."

Prince: "Will you help me?"

Corrin Corran: "Yes."

Prince: "Then I will reward you."

\* Then on and on went Prince Tuzan. Beside him the runner Corrin Corran.

\* The prince follows the same pattern with each of the characters. He goes up the line of helpers until he is near center stage. They are on a hill opposite the palace.

\* The prince has the hearer Oyin Oyan kneel down and put his ear to the ground.

\* The King sees the Prince and his helpers. He says to Fruela, "Too bad he doesn't know that the drum

head is made of the skin of a--(he whispers the word "Flea" into her ear)." (As narrator, you whisper the word first into the King's ear.)

\* Oyin Oyan tells the word to the Prince. (You whisper the word "flea" to Oyin Oyan.)

\* They go to the palace. The King taps the drum, "Tum-te-dum! The head of the drum-te-dum! Guess what it's made from-te-dum! And marry the Princess Fruela!"

\* The Prince says, "It isn't a goat skin, or a shoat skin. It appears to me to be the skin of a very large FLEA!"

\* The King is disappointed that he has guessed the riddle. He calls for two more tests. The prince must have one of his followers race an old woman to the sea and back.

\* Corrin Corran races the woman, who is really a witch. When they turn to come back she says, "Sleep!" and he drops where he is beside a tree.

\* Quickly, Soplín Soplan, the blower, blows the witch into the sea. (Have the audience make blowing sounds to help him.)

\* The archer then shoots an arrow into an apple on the tree. The apple falls down and wakens the runner, who continues the race and wins.

\* The King then brings out a large wagon full of food and tells the prince that one of his followers must eat all of the food in one sitting. The eater eats all of the food.

\* The Prince and Fruela join hands and are married. The followers are rewarded by getting to be with them in the palace.

\* Have all of the actors take a bow and the audience clap.

#### Follow-up Activities

1. Have a discussion about the story. Some sample questions could be: How would you feel if you were to start on a journey to win a prize? Why do you think the King had the riddle of the drum? How do you think Fruela felt about the tests?
2. Have the children make their own riddle poems.
3. Have the children write a story that could come from Mexico.
4. Make scenery for a finished presentation of the Riddle of the Drum.
5. Listen to Mexican music and decide on music to accompany a finished presentation.
6. Make costumes for a finished presentation.
7. Write invitations to their parents and to other classes for the presentation of the story.

Booklist for Hispanic Folklore and Literature

- Aardema, V. (1979). The riddle of the drum.  
New York: Four Winds.
- Delacre, L. (1989). Arroz con leche. New York:  
Scholastic.
- DePaola, T. (1980). The lady of Guadalupe. New York:  
Holiday House.
- Hayes, J. (Speaker). (1984). Tales of the southwest  
(Cassette recording). Weston, CT: Weston Woods.
- Lewis, T. (1987). Hill of fire. New York: Harper  
Junior.
- Politi, L. (1947). The song of the swallows.  
New York: Scribner.
- Politi, L. (1976). Three Stalks of Corn. New York:  
Scribner.
- Smith, J., & Parkes, B. (1989). Los Tres Chivos  
Vivos. Crystal Lake, IL: Rigby.
- Taha, K. (1986). A gift for Tia Rosa. Minneapolis,  
Minnesota: Dillon.

### Native American Stories and Folklore

The Native American Culture comes from many different tribes and is spread over a wide territory which now includes Alaska. The culture is rich in folktales but until recently, these stories have not been written down.

The folklore purists believe in listening only to oral stories, but as many of the storytellers are older, the stories are dying with the teller. Many times stories are written down by Anglos and are published. Although this is not a pure form, at least the stories are written down and saved for all to enjoy. Perhaps later they can be adapted in a more pure form.

A book that seeks to monitor books about Native Americans and is published for the rating of Indian stories by Indian standards is Through Indian Eyes by Slapin and Seale (1988). It is published by two women, a Native American and one with a Jewish background. They give a very detailed account of a wide range of children's stories, but they do tend to be harsh and somewhat extreme in their judgment. It is still helpful to read their reviews and to be sensitive to their position when using the literature.

Into Activities

- \* Choose a warm-up song or chant.

Through

- \* Choose a story from the story list to read aloud or to tell.

Example: Rat Is Dead and Ant Is Sad.

The story I have chose for the example is Rat Is Dead and Ant is Sad, which comes from the Pueblo Indians, and is retold here by Betty Baker (1981).

Setting:

The American Southwest.

Type of story:

An Accumulation story.

Story problem:

To find out if Rat is really dead.

Characters:

How do you think it would feel to be each one of these characters--Rat, Ant, Jay, Cottonwood tree, sheep, river, girl, mother, brother, and horse?

Story action:

Rat had a knot in her fur. She went to Ant to have her take it out. As Ant worked on the knot, Rat climbed on a pot.

"The knot is out," said Ant, and she let go.

PLOP went Rat.

"Rat," said Ant, "do you need help? Rat, are you still alive?"

Rat was busy and could not say. Ant ran this way and that. She began to cry.

"Why do you cry?" said Jay.

"Rat is dead and I am sad," said Ant.

"I will be sad, too," said Jay. "I will drop my feathers," and he did. He fell into a cottonwood tree.

Continue this pattern through each of the characters:

The tree shrivels and shrinks.

The sheep grows thin.

The river dries up.

The girl breaks the jar.

The mother burns her earrings.

The Brother starts to cut off the tail of his.

The Horse does not want her tail cut off and goes to each of the characters. She asks them who told them about Rat. None of the characters have actually seen Rat dead. Horse finally finds Ant crying beside the pot where she lost Rat. Horse puts her tail into the pot and Rat climbs out.

Discussion questions:

1. What should Ant have done instead of crying?



2. Can you think of another story where the animal cries instead of using its head? (Who's in Rabbit's House?) What culture was it from?

3. How are stories from different parts of the world alike? How are they different?

Beyond: Creative Dramatics

Example: Arrow to the Sun

The story I have used many times for Creative Dramatics is The Arrow to the Sun by Gerald McDermott.

Setting: The American Southwest.

Type of story: Creation story.

Story problem: The Boy must prove that he is the son of the Sun.

Characters: Choose students to act out: Boy, Sun, Mother, Corn Planter, Pot Maker, Arrow Maker.

The rest of the class can be divided into four groups--The Kiva of the Lions, the Kiva of the Serpents, the Kiva of the Bees, and the Kiva of Lightning. Discuss what sounds and actions each Kiva would have.

Story action:

Long ago the Lord of the Sun sent the spark of life to earth. (Have the Sun pretend to shoot Boy to center stage where the Mother is sitting.) In this way Boy came into the world of men. He lived and grew, but

the other boys teased him. "Where is your father?" they said.

The Boy and his Mother were sad. "Mother, I must go and find my father," said boy.

Boy traveled through the world of men and came to Corn Planter. (Have Corn Planter pantomime hoeing corn.) "Can you lead me to my father?" Boy asked. Corn Planter said nothing.

Boy went to Pot Maker. (Have Pot Maker pantomime making a pot and painting it.) "Can you lead me to my father?" Boy asked. Pot Maker said nothing.

Then Boy went to Arrow Maker. (Have Arrow Maker pantomime making arrows and shooting them.) "Can you lead me to my father?" Boy asked. Arrow maker said nothing, but he made Boy into an arrow. (Have Arrow Maker put Boy's hands together over his head.)

He shot Boy back to the Sun. "Father, it is I, your son!" said Boy.

"Maybe you are my son, maybe you are not," said the Sun. "You must prove yourself. You must pass through the four Kivas--the Kiva of Lions, the Kiva of Serpents, the Kiva of Bees, and the Kiva of Lightning."

(Take Boy to the four Kivas made up of his classmates. Have them make the sounds and actions of their Kiva when Boy is in the midst of them.)

When Boy came out of the Kiva of Lightning he was transformed. He became a rainbow and returned to earth. (Have Boy make a wide arching motion with his hands and return to center stage.)

The people celebrated his return in the Dance of Life. (Have the students move their hands to the left twice; move their hands to the right twice; nod their heads twice and clap twice.)

Have the actors take a bow and the audience clap.

#### Follow-up Activities

1. Discuss how Boy felt when he went into the various Kivas. Discuss how he felt when he became a rainbow and came back to earth.

2. Write stories about how rainbows could have started.

3. Listen to Indian music and learn a dance.

4. Draw or make a kachina doll.

5. Give the students the booklist to take home.

Have their parents go the library and find one of the books to read together.

Booklist of Native American Stories and Folktales

- Aliki. (1976). Corn is maize: The gift of the Indians. New York: Crowell.
- Andrews, J. (1986). The very last first time. New York: Atheneum.
- Baker, B. (1981). Rat is dead and ant is sad. New York: Harper & Row.
- Baylor, B. (1972). When clay sings. New York: Scribner.
- Baylor, B. (1975). The desert is theirs. New York: Atheneum.
- Goble, P. (1983). Star boy. Scarsdale, NY: Bradbury.
- McDermott, G. (1974). Arrow to the sun. New York: Viking.
- Martin, B., & Archambault, J. (1987). Knots on a counting rope. New York: Holt.
- Miles, M. (1971). Annie and the old one. New York: Little.
- Steptoe, J. (1984). The story of jumping mouse, a Native American legend. New York: Lothrop.

### Evaluation

The goal of this project is to help teachers in motivating their students to read more, and for the students to become aware of the values of different cultures. If students enjoy what they are reading, and if it is meaningful to them they will want to read more. The more the students read, the more proficient they will become in their reading fluency, and the greater their view of the world will become.

My aim as a teacher and a librarian has been to stimulate children with good literature. I have tried to show them that reading can be fun as well as functional. However, classrooms teachers often need ways of charting the students' progress. Some activities that show the students' involvement with the literature follow:

1. Keep a portfolio of the students' writing that has been generated from the story hour units.
2. Have the children tell oral stories into a tape recorder.
3. Stage a production using several folktales and stories, and invite the parents or another class to view the production. Videotape the presentation.
4. Have the students choose books from the Multicultural booklists and take them home to read with

their parents. Have the parents ask the child about the story setting, the story problem, and the characters.

5. Have the children write about the story they read with their parents.

This project will have served its purpose if the students who participate in the story hours carry their enthusiasm to the library and read more books. It will also have served its purpose if the students remember the literature longer and more fondly because they have participated in storytelling and creative dramatics. Hopefully the use of multicultural story hours will make students more aware of diverse cultures and help them in becoming more tolerant citizens.