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Penny J. Daytz

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California State University
San Bernardino, CA

Thematic Units: An Integrated Curriculum

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
Penny J. Daytz, M.A.
Karen J. Bacich, M.A.

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SUMMARY

The trend of reading programs today is moving toward a whole language philosophy. In a whole language program, reading is viewed as a meaningful experience for the students. Learning is an active constructive process in which children's prior knowledge, interests, and self-motivated purposes all have a major impact on learning. Thematic units guide this constructive process by integrating subject matter that is meaningful to students. Interrelated curriculum encourages children to make sense of their learning environment by connecting events and experiences from the literature.

One of the most difficult challenges facing educators is how to motivate students to learn. The thematic unit approach uses experiences to interest students to build their background knowledge in an environment that promotes risk taking. It then uses a whole language approach by integrating content subjects with reading while providing a variety of language and learning experiences. By creating successful learning experiences, a nonthreatening environment, and a link between experience and language, the thematic unit approach can help many students build background knowledge and become confident enough to take on the risk of learning.

This project is geared toward a whole language curriculum. Informal evaluations and the use of portfolios will be utilized. The success of the project will be evaluated by the enthusiasm of the students and the knowledge they gain.

Teachers using these units will find that they are able to become the facilitator rather than the ones directing all the lessons. Teachers will observe students using critical thinking skills and bringing their background knowledge into the class. In this way, the students learn from each other in various ways, rather than from a lecture. Therefore, learning becomes much more meaningful.
We dedicate this project to our parents, Diane, Elio, Arthur, and Miyoko. We thank them for all their love and support.

To Scott, thank you for being so loving, patient, and understanding throughout this project.

Finally, thanks to baby Ryan, who waited patiently to be born until this project was completed.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary........................................................................................................ i
Acknowledgements...................................................................................... iv
Statement of the Problem.............................................................................. 1
Review of the Literature.............................................................................. 8
Goals and Limitations.................................................................................. 22
Evaluation.................................................................................................... 25
References.................................................................................................... 29
Appendices.................................................................................................... 32
  Theme Cycle Overview............................................................................... 33
A  Seasons..................................................................................................... 34
    Bibliography.......................................................................................... 48
B  Weather..................................................................................................... 50
    Bibliography.......................................................................................... 62
C  Apples........................................................................................................ 63
    Bibliography.......................................................................................... 77
D  Crawling Things..................................................................................... 78
    Bibliography.......................................................................................... 89
E  Sealife......................................................................................................... 91
    Bibliography.......................................................................................... 104
F  Family....................................................................................................... 106
    Bibliography.......................................................................................... 119
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent years, the call for promoting higher level thinking throughout the content areas has grown considerably louder. For example, reports from the National Assessment of Educational Progress have shown that students within the United States perform poorly on items that require higher order-level thinking skills (Marzano, 1991). Parents and educators have raised concerns about the manner in which schools teach higher order thinking skills. Among the promising ideas to better prepare students in thinking skills is by teaching thematically.

Thematic units guide the students constructively by integrating subject matter that is meaningful to the students. All areas across the curriculum are integrated into thematic units. Literature can be the link to integrate and connect the subject areas of science, math, social studies, art, music and physical education. This interrelated curriculum encourages children to make sense of their learning environment by connecting events and experiences from the literature to a common theme that carries across many different disciplines (Moss, 1990).

In years past, traditional reading theories have not integrated subject matter as a means to teach reading and enhance student thinking. Reviewing the theoretical orientations of reading will point out why integrated curriculum is part of the whole language model.

The three most common reading orientations, decoding, skills, and whole language are constantly being compared to one another as a means for producing efficient readers. Educators and theorists continue to debate about which one is the most effective for classroom and individual situations.
The definition of decoding according to Harste and Burke (1980) is that reading is the mechanical skills of changing or recoding print into speech. Meaning is obtained through sound, either orally or subvocally. The reader uses the sounds to form words, and gets meaning from the sounds of words. The basis of reading is sound. The decoding philosophy uses the bottom up process. The first concept learned is the sound-symbol relationship. The second concept taught is the actual word and word families. Then the last concept the student learns is the meaning. The decoding model makes many assumptions about reading. One assumption is that knowing sounds and words will produce meaning, which in turn is a byproduct of the reading process. Meaning is on the page and deviations from the page are considered errors. Language is learned from part to whole in this sense.

The role of the teacher in the decoding orientation is to teach phonetic rules. The teacher instructs the students how to apply these rules in order to decode words. Once this is done, the student is able to reach comprehension. The students role in the decoding model is to learn the relationships between sounds of speech and graphic symbols. The student uses this information for decoding and to understand what the word is and then to comprehend its meaning. Teachers who follow the decoding approach would teach with the use of flashcards, workbooks, drills, and specific controlled vocabulary to present letter/sound relationships. Irregular words that do not fall into the phonetic rules are taught to the students as sight words. The students go through the same method everyday during their reading lesson. The students are then evaluated by different types of standardized mastery tests that are given at the end of each week or at the end of the unit being taught from the basal.
The second philosophical orientation of reading being taught in schools today is that of the skills method. The skills method teaches reading by an hierarchy of skills. The definition of the skills method according to Harste and Burke (1980) is that reading is a system of three skills: decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension; all of which play various roles of importance when reading. From this definition it is presumed that language is learned as a set of discrete skills learned from word parts to whole. Many theorists feel that meaning occurs automatically after the recognition of words in a sentence. Meaning, therefore, is the sum of the meanings of each of the words in the sentence. The students would need to learn and know all three skills in order for reading to take place and meaning to follow. Theorists also feel that oral language is primary for speaking skills to develop; print is secondary. Reading is a precise, perfectable process and like the decoding approach, deviations from the page are considered to be errors. The basis of reading is the word.

The role of the teacher in the skills philosophy is to teach the hierarchy of skills in vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. The teacher, therefore, teaches the word and then meaning in the reading lesson everyday. Instead of taking a whole story, the student first learns the word out of context and then reads the story, taking the directed meaning with them. Students need to master these three skills and integrate them while reading. To teach these skills the teacher uses the basal reader and workbook pages to go along with the story. These pages review the skills learned earlier. To supplement the workbook or extend the skills the teacher also uses worksheets. The students are evaluated on the skills learned through standardized tests or basal mastery tests.
The third philosophical orientation toward reading is whole language. Whole language is the opposite of the decoding philosophy. In whole language, the meaning of the text is the core with which a student learns first. The definition of whole language according to Harste and Burke (1980) is that reading is a process of three interrelated cueing systems; graphic, syntactic and semantic. The reader then uses these to predict, confirm, and integrate meaning from the text. According to the whole language theorists, speech and print are interrelated systems. Print extends the language of the user. Neither speech nor print have any particular order of importance. The reading process is a natural function and will happen through time just like the steps that children use when they learn to speak. The big difference between whole language and the other two reading approaches is that the reader brings their background to the reading of the book (schema). Meaning is the basis of reading and is not a group of complicated skills to be learned. Understanding of the function precedes the understanding of form (letters). Most of the reading taking place is through nonvisual information. This brings in all of the student's ideas before reading the story so that they are able to understand it. According to whole language theorists, reading is not a perfectable process. Deviations from the text are called miscues, not errors. These miscues are the variation between what the reader understands and what the author intends to convey.

The role of the teacher in whole language is to teach function and form of language through reading, speaking, writing, and listening. These are taught at one time and are not broken up into specific letters or words that make no sense to the student. In turn, the students use reading, writing, speaking and listening to gain meaning. The students
are evaluated through the use of predictable books, literature, group works, composing their own writing, and journal writing. Most of these the children can do everyday, not just once a week or at the end of a basal unit. The students are evaluated through different types of logs, checklists, longitudinal writing samples, anecdotal records, and the RMI-reading miscue inventory. The RMI uses the whole story rather than a part of the story and the students are not graded down for missing a word or changing a word as long as the context remains understandable.

Curriculum is like a pendulum. The whole language philosophy has become popular because test scores and literacy in our nation have declined. New Zealand has one of the highest literacy rates, having made astonishing improvements from the past. "Some whole language proponents find it more than coincidental that New Zealand and Australia rank at the top of international comparisons of literacy, while the United States barely rates a spot in the top third" (Gursky, 1991, p. 29).

Some teachers in the United States wanted to follow New Zealand's methods, hoping to improve our nation's literacy rate. New Zealand's curriculum is based on whole language theory. This is one of the reasons why the trend in reading programs in the United States today is based on whole language theory. Gursky (1991) states that whole language educators have taken ideas from countries abroad and there appears to be a current revolution in this country. Thematic teaching is one of the practices used in a whole language curriculum. Thematic teaching uses themes built into the curriculum to enhance learning. Thematic teaching builds positive experiences that broaden a student's perspective while building self-esteem, background knowledge and reading ability.
The thematic approach is not a new idea. It was popular during the 1960's and 70's when our nation struggled with change, such as Watergate and Vietnam. Textbook publishers were trying to meet the demands of curriculum leaders to make purposeful and meaningful reading materials (Kaplan, 1990). The purpose of using thematic units is to use literature as a means of teaching and interrelating concepts into themes to make learning more applicable. The subject of the theme becomes more interesting and makes learning more enjoyable because the students are learning about one subject from a variety of methods. By viewing the learning experience as a meaningful event, students become motivated to learn. Although the research base for whole language philosophy and thematic units is broad and multidisciplinary, many insights are collaborated from classroom practices and actual progress that students are making.

This project will show how thematic units enhance students knowledge and motivation across the curriculum by using the broad theme of, "cycles." "Cycles" was chosen because there are a variety of different cycles that naturally occur in nature. This project will include six different units of cycles; Seasons, Weather, Apples, Crawling Things, Sealife and Family. We chose these units because they are taught in primary grades to fit with the California language arts framework. We feel that these units will benefit teachers to teach an integrated curriculum. We emphasize an integrated curriculum because these units are designed to fit into a whole language philosophy of reading. Although thematic units can be adapted into a skills based curriculum we feel that these units better represent the whole language philosophy by incorporating reading, writing, speaking and listening into an integrated curriculum. We want the
teachers and the students to benefit from the learning process that will occur. These six units were designed to meet the needs of the second and third grade curriculums.

The goal of this project is for students to use language in ways that more directly relate to their own lives and cultures. The thematic units will motivate, encourage, and actively engage students in the reading, writing, speaking and listening processes. The educational system as it stands today needs to produce more literate citizens. By using and integrating thematic units in the curriculum reading will be seen as a meaningful approach to teach subjects. This in turn will create readers who will be able to develop critical thinking skills and become confident and successful citizens.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Whole Language Theory

The English-Language Arts Framework (1987) advises that schools should implement an effective language arts program with interdisciplinary literature connections. By having a strong language arts program, students can use language in ways that relate to their own lives and cultures. Students must be given opportunities to use reading, writing, speaking and listening skills throughout the school day. The four aspects that will be examined in the literature review are: whole language theory, thematic units, critical thinking in thematic units and writing processes.

The trend of reading programs today focuses on the whole language philosophy. In a whole language program, reading is viewed as a meaningful experience for students. Learning is an active constructive process in which children's prior knowledge, interests, and self-motivated purposes all have a major impact on learning. Thematic units guide this constructive process by integrating subject matter that is meaningful to students. All areas across the curriculum are integrated into thematic units. The thematic approach benefits learning because it is interesting to students.

According to the whole language philosophy, there are four systems of language. These are: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Children not only read, but also write about and discuss what they have read. Learning is viewed as social; learning requires risk-taking and experimentation. Students must construct meaning and relate new information to prior knowledge. When learners are actively involved and have a real purpose, then they are able to acquire new knowledge.
The whole language philosophy differs from the traditional skills approach. Students' interests are not important in a skills approach curriculum because the curriculum is based on following the chapters in textbooks. Students may be studying about dinosaurs in science, capitalization in language, and reading a story about toads in their reading books. There is no meaningful integration. Also, "drill-like" dittos, which are part of the skills curriculum, are not interesting to children. According to the whole language philosophy, Harp (1988) states that, reading and writing are viewed as processes, rather than accumulations of small skills. How children are handling the processes is the teacher's focus rather than the acquisition of discrete skills. Thus, thematic units spark children's interests by making learning purposeful.

According to Fountas and Hannigan (1989), reading should not be seen as a precise process involving exact, detailed sequential perception and identification of letters, words and language units. It should be seen as a whole and not a process of individualized learning tasks. Language is only language when it is whole, according to Goodman (1986). The whole language method teaches reading much like the way children learn to speak. Goodman (1986) feels that since virtually all babies learn to speak their home language in a very short time without formal teaching, there is the need to make language learning in school as easy as it was in the home.

Educators should invite children to use language purposefully and functionally. Reading is a natural process and will happen through time like speech. "Immersion from birth in a meaningful, language rich environment affords children opportunities to model the communication processes" (Fountas and Hannigan 1989, p. 134). By using whole stories and not just part of a story, a child can increase his reading ability and
knowledge because it makes more sense. Trying to break language up by controlling vocabulary and adhering to strict phonic principles confuses students. Therefore, reading becomes unpredictable, unnatural, irrelevant and dull (Fountas and Hannigan, 1989). "The growing number of teachers, school administrators, and scholars who have become part of the whole language movement believe the traditional school not only doesn't encourage learning but also often obstructs it" (Gursky, 1991, p. 23).

Whole language is a grass-roots movement according to Yetta Goodman (1989). She states that many groups of teachers, teacher educators, and researchers are participating in a network of study and discussion groups. These groups are raising questions, researching, writing articles and coming up with a definition of whole language. The definition of whole language encompasses a number of fundamental assumptions such as, learning is social, requires risk taking and experimentation, involves constructing meaning, and relating new information to prior knowledge (Newman and Church, 1990).

The concept of integrated language arts was influenced by the concept of the integrated day or the idea of the integrated curriculum (Yetta Goodman, 1989). In the 1940's and 1950's curriculum theorists promoted the concept of an integrated curriculum. Integrated programs were being developed for elementary, middle and secondary schools.

"Integration of curriculum was influenced not only from the the point of view of the unity of knowledge through the integration of subject matter but also included a concern for the integration of attitudes and values..." (Yetta Goodman, 1989, p. 120). Many of these views stem from the teachings of John Dewey and his views of education. John
Dewey (1949) felt that educators should start teaching on the level where the learner is. Dewey and Bentley (1949) felt that learners are strong, capable, and eager to learn. They view education as child centered in that it accepts the responsibility for helping every child to grow as much as possible in whatever direction is the most useful.

Not only is whole language child centered but it also sees the common strengths in students as well the differences in their language, culture, values, experiences, needs and interests. In a whole language classroom everyone is viewed as a learner. This goes for the teacher as well as the students. Teachers share with their students what they know, but also gain valuable information from their students. Both collaborate their knowledge to enhance problem solving strategies and increase their knowledge of the world.

"Pupils and teachers in whole language classrooms will be found in a wide range of activities, locations, and ways of relating to each other. So it will not be easy to define role structures" (Goodman, 1989, p. 211). Teachers are seen as the facilitators and the students role is to generate ideas and knowledge from the information given and from their own background knowledge.

**Thematic Units**

Thematic units encompass a whole language approach. Children are learning in a print-rich environment that includes literature in all its variety; art, science, social studies and math. "Whole language integrates language and its use in learning. Thematic units are planned to last several weeks and integrate social studies, language arts, science, mathematics, and the arts" (Goodman, 1989, p. 218).
Thematic units integrate literature throughout the curriculum through the use of themes. A thematic unit takes a general topic and explores it fully across the curriculum. Focusing on a theme enables the activities to focus on the four components of language arts (listening, speaking, reading and writing) to correlate activities with the content areas. Walmsley and Walp (1990) cite that specific topics that are chosen offer teachers and students the opportunity to explore important concepts far more in depth than a textbook offers.

When students have background knowledge and an understanding of the subject matter, they become more involved in the learning process. Teachers can foster better learning by giving the students a choice in what they want to learn. Students feel more involved and have pride in what they learn if they have an opinion as to what should be taught. This is done through theme cycles.

At the beginning of the school year themes are chosen by the teacher and are incorporated into the curriculum when the teacher feels it is the appropriate time. As the students become more involved they are given a list of topics that must be covered during the academic year. The topics are narrowed down until a particular one is chosen to be taught and learned that month. The topics are ones which the state establishes for a certain grade level.

Prior knowledge influences how students interpret what they are reading. Comprehensions can occur when students are given prior knowledge to a topic. Ogle (1986) states that "to help teachers honor what children bring to each reading situation and model for their students the importance of accessing appropriate knowledge sources before reading, we have developed a simple procedure that can be used..." (p. 564).
The three step procedure is called a "K-W-L" which possesses three basic cognitive steps. These steps include, *what I want to Know*, *determining what I Want to learn*, and *recalling what I did Learn as a result of reading* (Ogle, 1986).

Kathy DeZengremel (1990) uses theme cycles regularly and feels that a teacher should acquire trade books to relate to the theme. Also, she states that one should have an adequate supply of books that discuss the theme topic available in the school library. "The unit begins by activating background knowledge and setting a purpose by having students complete a type of K-W-L activity with columns labeled 'What I Think I Know' and 'What I Want to Know.' A separate sheet titled 'What I Learned' is used during the unit to document literary learning" (DeZengremel, 1990, p. 86).

Because students choose the topic and must discover how to learn the topic, they actually learn and retain more. Students share what they know about the topic with their classmates. These are the ideas and interests of the student's. The curriculum should be focused on what the children want to learn about the subject, not what the teacher or book wants them to know. Kathy DeZengremel (1990), a reading specialist, tried the theme cycle in her classroom during a class study of pigs. She said that the excitement of an unusual theme can motivate students to read and write and can enliven school spirit. The children took part in reading and writing activities, literature, and hands-on pig experiences.

Even the high school dropouts that Susan Davis (1990) worked with felt that by being able to choose and by using their background knowledge, they were "hooked" into learning. Themes should flow naturally from children's interests. For example, according to Fountas and Hannigan (1989), students studying the ocean should observe
fish, take notes, make sketches, write in journals, make fish prints, read poems, articles and stories about fish, sing sea songs, use folklore that deal with sea life and the students might visit an aquarium.

Many authors have given ideas on how to plan themes. They all express the importance of student's interests. In order to make learning meaningful and purposeful, students' interests must be taken into account. Jeanette Nunnelley (1990), states that curriculum themes offer a variety of activities and themes based on traditional themes. "Teachers need not limit their program to traditional themes, however. There is a whole world to explore and discover that goes beyond these familiar themes" (Nunnelley, 1990, p. 24). Many teachers gear their curriculum to holiday events such as "Christmas", "Thanksgiving", and "Easter". Teachers should go beyond the traditional themes and reach out to the students' interests.

Brainstorming is the first step in creating thematic units. Teachers, parents, and children can brainstorm ideas for innovative topics. Once ideas have been listed, the list can be narrowed down. Topics should be manageable and focused. What makes this more interesting for the students is the fact that their ideas are also represented. The curriculum is not determined by textbooks. If the second grade science book had deserts as a topic, maybe the students would want to learn about camels and Arabs instead of the Mojave Desert discussed in their science book. The textbooks do not dictate the curriculum. However, there are some guidelines that need to be followed because what is taught at each grade level needs to fit into the California framework.

Many publishers are trying to make money and take advantage of the whole language movement. "Commercial publishers and governmental and quasi-
governmental groups have developed whole language resource materials such as big books, predictable books, writing portfolios, kits of trade books and teaching units for use with literature sets" (Goodman, 1989, p. 218). However, teachers feel quite capable with their own ability to collect enough authentic resources to meet students needs (Goodman, 1989).

Many teachers become involved in thematic units by simply working together at grade level meetings. One school voiced its concerns about academically grouping children. The teachers approached their principal and expressed their ideas about using the whole language program which involves heterogeneous grouping. Their principal was willing to try the new idea. The teachers changed their program and found the change successful (Lamme & Lee, 1990). This can be overwhelming at first but Davis (1990) suggests getting together with other staff members, or those on your grade level, to work to plan the themes for the year.

What makes Thematic teaching so unique is that one uses the whole curriculum for learning to take place through the use of literature. "Whole language philosophy underlies the entire curriculum. Inquiries in science, social studies and mathematics provide many opportunities for learners to be actively involved in solving meaningful problems" (Newman and Church, 1990, p. 21). Students should be given many opportunities to generate meanings using a variety of communication systems that include not only reading, math, science and social studies but also art, music and drama, according to Crook and Lehman (1991). The activities that the students participate in should encourage the students to build and integrate meanings from a variety of sources and materials. According to Fountas and Hannigan (1989), in classrooms where skills
and subject matter are interwoven, children experience a curriculum that is not fragmented. Skill work occurs within units of experience based on a common idea. Students are actively involved in a variety of tasks and learning situations that expand their understanding of the theme.

Units should be broad and built upon to extend the experiences and interests of students. There should be a continuity of experience from all students. Cook and Lehman (1991) feel that units should include a variety of poems and stories as well as literary nonfiction. By using fiction and nonfiction, students come in contact with different ideas as well as writing styles. "Fiction gives a perspective that allows children to know facts in another way...to confirm what they are learning from informational sources" (Cook and Lehman, 1991, p. 35). Through the use of the whole curriculum, thematic units foster greater learning of a specific topic. Most units last between two to four weeks. During this time students are inundated with literature from all curriculum fields of study on one theme. Since learning one subject takes place over a one month period, the students become active learners in that subject (Davis, 1990). Therefore, the students learn more than they could have if they read one story during reading and read part of a science chapter on a particular topic.

*Critical Thinking in Thematic Units*

Another aspect of thematic units is that it allows for critical thinking and problem solving skills. Students think deeply about the ideas and issues discovered in the classroom and must develop answers for certain situations. Since all students bring with them different background knowledge, their approach to solving problems will differ also. By using thematic units, students can explore with concrete materials. For
example, if a classroom were studying apples, it would weigh and measure real apples. The class would also slice the apples in order to learn fractions and then use the apple slices to make apple pie. Using manipulatives make learning concrete and more understandable. Learning is not just based on ideas and theories, it is based on actual experience.

The learner must have control over a task in order to not hinder the learning process in which the learner is engaged. "As applied to classroom instruction, this implies that for knowledge to be restructured and higher level thinking fostered, students must use knowledge within tasks over which they have some control in which match personal goals or needs" (Marzano, 1991, p. 519). Students must have control of their learning and the pace in which they can progress in order for higher level thinking to take place.

In years past, many believed that critical thinking skills only took place in math and science. However recent discoveries have shown that critical thinking has been fostered by using an integrated curriculum. Thematic units involve cognitive operations such as; naturalistic inquiry, problem solving and composing (Marzano, 1991).

Language is also fostered through the use of thematic units. The use of oral and written language focuses on what the students are learning. "There is a natural integration of subject matter and provides instruction within the context of purposeful, meaningful experiences" (Staab, 1991, p. 108). Learners are able to investigate problems. Instruction is not based on correct answers and responses. Instruction is based on exploring, writing reactions to stories, and asking questions.

Schwartz (1983) asserted that students come to school prepared to make sense of what they find there. "This search for meaning can be employed in acquiring language
competencies by creating the conditions and providing the experiences that stimulate rather than impede the operation of learning. Teachers must provide experiences with language that are integrated, whole, natural, functional, and meaningful" (Flickinger and Long, 1990, p. 150).

For example, Patricia Cordeiro (1990) explains that her class was studying pioneer life. The problem which she creates serves as a base for the theme usually stated as a simulation. This is only the starting point for the actual activities that will follow. She states that different groups of students and teachers might solve similar problems differently. Cordeiro reminded her students that pioneers traveled by covered wagons. Her class was studying the westward movement and the problem she gave her class was for them to come up with the best way for the pioneers to get to the West. "The classroom experience went far beyond the planned activities. The students immersed themselves in the characters they created and the lives they were living" (Cordeiro, 1990, p. 28).

Not only are the students learning about the westward movement through books, they are actively role playing a situation and coming up with a solution to a problem in such a way that they will never forget the information they have learned. "Problem solving fosters thinking by forcing the learner to reason within a network of constraints" (Marzano, 1991, p. 521). Thematic units not only develop critical thinking skills but also are beneficial in helping students feel successful.

Thematic units are beneficial to use in any type of classroom because all students feel successful. Each student comes into the classroom with a different background. When students pool their ideas together, they realize that they each have something
beneficial to add to the learning process (Davis, 1990). Children learn best when the teacher acts as the provider of materials and the facilitator of learning (Staab, 1991). This lets the students answer their own question instead of depending on someone else to answer them. "Teachers should be engaged in helping students to participate in the process that makes possible the establishment of knowledge...to take place in the process of knowledge-getting. Knowledge is a process, not a product" (Cordeiro, 1990, p. 29). When presenting thematic material to children in the form of problem solving, teachers tap into a form of learning through doing. 

**Writing Processes**

Writing is also viewed as an active, constructive process. Writers at all stages are involved in an act of creating meaning because they have something to say. Students are involved in risk taking as they try new words and ways of expressing their ideas (Fountas and Hannigan, 1989). Students write more in thematic instruction because it takes into account the belief of whole language. It uses all the skills in writing, reading, listening and speaking. When students write more, they become more proficient writers.

As students read the works of good writers, they internalize new language techniques that may be applied to their own writing (Fountas and Hannigan, 1989). As these students write, they will develop their own styles to successfully promote their ideas to their readers. "A classroom which successfully uses literature in a variety of ways, as in thematic instruction, inspires students to move from reading to writing and writing to reading so as to gain the knowledge of the connection between the two" (Marzano, 1990, p. 521).
Graves (1983) has demonstrated that students who are writing in an environment where they are surrounded by literature instead of going through a basal reader and its accompanying workbook pages are learning to read at least as well as the other students. Yet, at the same time, such students are learning to write.

It is important for students to select their own topics when writing. "The only way teachers can truly help children become fluent writers is by letting students write for many purposes, on topics of their own, and for audiences of their own" (Farris and Kaczmarski, 1988, p. 79).

Summary

In whole language programs, thematic units enable learning to be individualized. Newman and Church (1990) write that it is a myth by non-educators that there is no evaluation in whole language. These authors discuss the fact that whole language teachers are always evaluating. Teachers are actively involved in their student's progress by noticing when a student tries a new strategy or demonstrates awareness of a writing convention. Teachers examine students work, and looks for evidence of their latest discoveries (Newman and Church, 1990). Evaluation focuses on the individual progress of each child.

Positive evaluation allows students to take risks. Susan Davis (1990) states that the thematic experience approach uses experiences to interest students and to build their background knowledge in an environment that promotes risk taking (Davis, 1990). It is believed that creating a learning environment that is non-threatening, and an environment that builds a relationship between experience and language, helps students to become confident enough to take on the risk of learning.
Overall, thematic instruction benefits students by changing the nature of teaching and by using whole concepts rather than parts. "What is important is how the whole-language movement has influenced pedagogy, research, and teacher-education programs, and the positive effect it has had on the changing nature of teaching and the learning of students in whole-language classrooms" (Yetta Goodman, 1989, p. 115).

One of the most difficult challenges facing educators is how to motivate students to learn. The thematic unit approach uses experiences to interest students to build their background knowledge in an environment that promotes risk taking. It then uses a whole language approach by integrating content subjects with reading while providing a variety of language and learning experiences. By creating successful learning experiences, a nonthreatening environment, and a link between experience and language, the thematic unit approach can help many students build background knowledge and become confident enough to take on the risk of learning.

Thematic units are becoming the new wave of teaching and learning. Educators, as well as parents, need to find new and exciting ways to teach children and to keep up with the growing technology. "Change involves a critical appraisal of our instructional practices, trying to identify contradictions within our theoretical assumptions and their impacts on our students" (Newman and Church, 1990, p. 26). All the research on thematic units take a positive approach and state that all students, no matter where they come from, or their background, will learn. According to Marzano (1990), changes seem worth the effort, for it will only be through enhancing thinking for all students across the curriculum that American education can meet the mounting challenges of the present and the future.
GOALS AND LIMITATIONS

The goal of this project is to actively engage students in the Language Arts program. One aspect of this project is that all students will learn thoroughly about the intended topic. The students will learn from each other, by using their background knowledge and by researching and reading books. The students will experience and enjoy many types of literature and written language. The students will not only read the literature but they will also experience writing about topics in many different writing styles. This could be done through journals, poems, dialogue and expository writing.

Not only will students be reading and writing about literature in reading, they will also be experiencing it throughout the curriculum. Thematic instruction allows for students to learn about various topics in more than one way, through literature. Students are inundated with ideas and knowledge not only from reading but from learning about topics through literature through math, science, social studies, art and drama.

The teacher's goal in the thematic based classroom is to produce learning. This is done not by the teacher being the one to make the decisions, but by the students being able to choose what they want to learn about. The teacher is the facilitator. Another goal the teacher has is to have students learn about various subject matters in meaningful ways. Furthermore, the teacher wants the students to grow up to be capable decision makers and to be able to use critical thinking skills. The teacher will also utilize the background knowledge that the students bring into the class with them everyday. In
this way the students learn from each other in various ways, other than from the teacher lecturing, and therefore learning is much more meaningful.

Thematic units are very versatile and can easily be adopted by any grade level. Thematic units integrate the curriculum in a meaningful and exciting way that promotes higher level learning.

Some limitations that one might come across in this project is that even though thematic units integrate the curriculum and utilize the whole language philosophy teachers who teach in a skills based classroom can also adapt these units to fit their needs. These units are constructed for the second and third grades and may be hard to adapt to lower or higher grade levels. However, educators teaching other grade levels can alter the units to fit their grade level curriculum. This does not make thematic units weak, it just again proves how versatile they can be.

The purchase of literature books and literary materials can be very expensive and can be seen as a limitation. Many teachers have been purchasing their own sets, which can be quite costly, since school budgets and state budgets for education have been cut. Many of the items needed to teach thematically can be donated to a class or school however books an class literature set usually are not.

Another limitation to this project is that each thematic unit is based on a two week cycle. The units, however, could easily go longer and encompass more material and literature.

Overall, thematic units can be taught to fit the teacher's style. No matter how thematic units are taught, because of their versatility, the most important aspect is that
students will find learning much more meaningful, enjoyable and exciting. Looking at it both ways underscores the philosophy of whole language and thematic units.
EVALUATION

Evaluation is necessary in order to find out student's growth. Evaluation must be an on-going process that reflects the knowledge that students have acquired. There are two basic types of evaluation. One is formal assessment and the other is informal assessment.

Formal evaluation would include standardized tests to determine skills learned. Formal assessment only allows for one correct answer. Many standardized tests are multiple choice with only one correct answer. The standardized tests are also very structured and are often times found in a skills based and decoding based classroom. On the other hand, informal tests involve open-ended questions with more than one correct answer. Informal evaluation is always seen in a whole language classroom.

Traditionally, children have been evaluated by standardized tests. Many school districts use standardize test scores to determine retention or GATE status. The scores are also compared school to school and state to state. Very often test scores are used as a means to evaluate teachers. Standardized tests are the most commonly used measures in American schools for classification, accountability and monitoring student progress (Strickland and Morrow, 1989). "Standardized tests, with their multiple choice question format, do not allow the reader to interpret the text based on personal background knowledge and experiences" (Routman, 1991, p. 300).

The holistic evaluation process begins with assessment and collecting data. Routman (1991) cites that the goal of evaluation is to make the learner self-regulating, self-monitoring and independent. Students and teachers need to be able to reflect and set new directions for teaching and learning.
The thematic units designed for this project will assess students by using informal testing methods. Journal writing is a way to assess students' reading and writing in a supportive and nonthreatening way. Journals allow for students to communicate their thoughts and knowledge of a certain area without having to be concerned about the grammar and mechanics of language.

Journals enable teachers to gain knowledge about their students and also develop a personal relationship with their students. Teachers can look at journals over a period of time and gain insight on the growth of each student. There are different types of journals that can be used as a means of evaluation. These journals are; personal journals, dialogue journals and literature logs.

Author's folders provide a cumulative record of an author's pieces of writing. Over a period of time both the student and the teacher can monitor growth in writing processes and mechanics (Harste, Short and Burke 1988). Students are able to see their strengths and their weaknesses.

Anecdotal records are also another way to evaluate students. "Whole language teachers capture the events and interactions of their classroom in their anecdotal records" (Goodman, Goodman and Hood, 1988, p. 21). An anecdotal checklist report can be used to evaluate students' progress. Checklists can include categories in listen/speaking, reading, spelling and grammar/syntax. The checklist can include a rating scale from one to three. After evaluating the checklist reports, teachers can gain insight of each of the students' needs.

Self-evaluation requires students to look at their work and accomplishments and ask "how am I doing?" Schwartz (1991) believes that progress should not be seen only by
the teacher but by the students as well. It is crucial that students see their strengths and weaknesses and can document their own learning. Students can reflect on what they think they did well in, and on what they think they can improve. Teachers can help guide this reflection by having individual conferences with the students.

"The foremost goal of evaluation is self-evaluation, that is, the analysis of our own attitudes and processes so that we can use the information to promote continued growth and learning" (Routman, 1991, p. 342). Self-evaluation enables students to be independent and allows students to make decisions about their learning.

Peer evaluation and group discussions can also be used as a way to evaluate. "As children watch each other and talk together about their work, they provide important demonstrations for one another" (Harste, Short and Burke, 1988, p. 16). Learning can be social and children should be able to learn from each other rather than depending on only the teacher as a means to learning.

Teacher evaluation is also a good tool in assessment. Video taping lessons can be a learning experience for teachers because the tape allows teachers to view a lesson from a different perspective. A video camera accurately records both an audio and visual record. When discussing a student's growth with parents, video tapes can be a good basis for discussion. Video taping can also help teachers reflect their own strengths and weaknesses and help them set goals and new directions.

Journal writing, anecdotal records and self-evaluations can all be kept in a student portfolio. Portfolios can be a useful device in monitoring ongoing growth. Portfolios can be evaluated on growth demonstrated within an individual portfolio, rather than on comparisons made among different students' work (Vavrus, 1990). Review
conferences between the teacher and the student can help establish what goes into a portfolio and what can be taken out. The student and the teacher should chose which pieces will best reflect growth and to which pieces will best help the next year's teacher in terms of setting new goals.

Evaluation is a means to find children's growth and progress. Since this project is a reflection of a whole language curriculum, all six units will include informal evaluations such as journals, teacher' observations, anecdotal records and portfolios. The success of the project will be evaluated by the enthusiasm of the students and the knowledge they gain.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
THEME CYCLE OVERVIEW

We chose cycles as the basis of our thematic units for second and third grade students because cycles play an important role in everyday life. The cycles are: Seasons, weather, apples, crawling things, sealife, and family. These units will utilize an Into, Through and Beyond format. This entails getting the students prepared for the lesson, reading the literature and activities that follow-up the literature.

Life is cyclical from the way the Earth rotates to create the four seasons, to the weather that occurs with each rotation. This type of pattern holds true for the crawling creatures that go through specific life phases and the trees that provide life's breath for many other species on Earth. Finally, the cycle that can never change is the inevitability of birth and death. Whether life begins below the depths of the sea or on Earth's surface, with humans, there is the certainty of death.

Thematic units encompass a great variety of books for the students to read and discover. All of the books mentioned in the bibliography may not be included in the daily lesson plans. The books not mentioned will be places out in the room during the units for the students to look at during free time, silent reading or for group research.
RATIONALE:

This unit on seasons will teach students that the world changes. As the world changes, living organisms change too. Seasons are part of a cycle and students need to learn that seasons are important for growth and new beginnings. All living things rely on the different seasons. People change their recreational activities according to the seasons. Animals and plants rely on the seasons for death and rebirth.

The purpose of the Season unit is to communicate and solidify the following concepts. These concepts are:

1. All living things rely on the seasons.
2. Organisms change as the seasons change.
3. The cycle of the seasons depicts death and rebirth.

EVALUATION:

Informal and formal discussion will be used as an ongoing process. This can be done as a whole class or in small groups. Students will keep personal as well as self-evaluative journals throughout the unit. Reader response, teacher observations and anecdotal records will be used as means of evaluation.

Day 1

Concepts:

1. All living things rely on the seasons.
2. Organisms change as the seasons change.
3. The cycle of the seasons depicts death and rebirth.
Into:
1. In the students journals they will write what they know about the four seasons.
2. The students will share their knowledge with the class.
3. The students will write about their favorite season.

Through:
The students will read half of *Frog and Toad All Year*.
The teacher will read the rest of the book to the students.

Beyond:

*Language Arts*:
1. The students will take a piece of paper and fold it into six squares. In each square the students will draw a picture and add two sentences explaining the illustration. Each of the six squares will be in sequential order.
2. In small groups of student choice they will decide how they want to present the book to the class. This can be done through drama, poster, poem, song or book.

*Art*:
3. The students will make a diorama of their favorite chapter from the story *Frog and Toad All Year*.

Day 2
Concepts:
1. Organisms change as the seasons change.
2. The cycle of the seasons depicts death and rebirth.
Into:
1. The teacher will ask the students why they think the seasons change.

Through:
The teacher will read *The Seasons*.

Beyond:

*Science:*
1. The teacher will demonstrate with a globe how the earth's axis always points to the north star.
   As the earth rotates, the earth tilts in a different position which causes the different seasons.
2. The students will draw a picture of the earth at each of the four seasons.

*Math:*
3. The students will calculate how many days in each season with the teacher's help.

*Drama:*
4. The students will demonstrate the four seasons using stick puppets.

*Language Arts:*
5. The teacher will read *This Year's Garden*.

Day 3

Concepts:
1. All living things rely on the seasons.
2. Organisms change as the seasons change.
Into:
1. The students will write what they know about the sun.
2. The class will discuss why the sun is important to us.
3. The students will read *Bear Shadow*.

Through:
The teacher will read *Sunshine Makes the Seasons*.

Beyond:

*Science:*
1. The students will go outside three times during the day and trace their shadows on the blacktop.
2. The students will make sundials.

*Math:*
3. The students will measure their shadows each time and graph the results.

*Social Studies:*
4. The teacher will read *Is Anybody Up?*
5. The class will discuss international time zones from a world map.
6. The teacher will demonstrate with a flashlight and a globe how the earth rotates and what countries have day and which countries have night.
Day 4

Concepts: 1. All living things rely on the seasons.

Into:
1. The teacher will ask the students if they know what a myth is.
2. The class will discuss the responses given.
3. The teacher will read *Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky*.

Through:
The students will read the Canadian Indian myth *How the Sun Made a Promise and Kept It*.

Beyond:
*Language Arts:*
1. The students will write their own myth on why the sun shines.

*Art:*
2. The students will make paper mache Indian sun mask.

*Social Studies:*
3. The students will locate Canada on a map.
4. The students will color in the main provinces.

Day 5

Concepts
1. All living things rely on the seasons.
2. Organisms change as the seasons change.
3. The cycle of the seasons depicts death and rebirth.
Into:
1. The teacher will read the poem "Snowman" by Shel Silverstein.
2. The class will discuss hibernation and death that occurs in the winter.

Through:
The teacher will read *The Black Snowman*.

Beyond:

*Language Arts:*
1. The students will create their own story about a snowman.

*Art:*
2. The students will make a mosaic snowman.

*Drama:*
3. The students will memorize the poem "Snowman Recipe" and act out the poem in small groups.
   The students will chorally read the poem as they act it out.
SNOWMAN RECIPE

Sifting, sifting, from the sky,
Snow that’s soft but not too dry!
Roll a snowball firm and round;
Roll it clear across the ground.
Make it big—as big as you—
And then roll up ball number two.
Make each mound smaller, three in all.
Then stack your snowman, three rounds tall.
Get a cookie for his mouth;
A carrot nose can then point south.
Two shiny prunes make lovely eyes.
A bright red hat! Flouncy ties!
Push doughnuts halfway in for ears.
(Wonder if a snowman hears?)
Make buttons out of sunflower seeds;
String popcorn into strands of beads.
Now on thing more, tomorrow at dawn
Peep out at your snowman on the lawn.
You’ll squeal with joy to see birds come
And gobble your goodies crumb by crumb!

---Helen Sue Isely

Science:

4. The teacher will read The Big Snow.

5. In small groups, the students will make a list of all the things that animals have to do to prepare for hibernation.
Day 6

Concepts:
1. All living things rely on the seasons.
2. Organisms change as the seasons change.
3. The cycle of the seasons depicts death and rebirth.

Into:
1. Students will discuss what happens in spring to plants and animals.
2. Review that spring occurs do to the rotation of the earth.

Through:
The teacher will read *There's More... Much More.*
The students will discuss all the things that show spring.

Beyond:

*Language Arts:*
1. The students will read *Spring Is.*
2. The students will write their own stories on "What is Spring."
Music:

3. The students will sing a song of seasons to the tune of Dixie:

   It's spring outside my window
   I see it everywhere
   Green grass, pretty flowers
   A bird nest right up there
   It's summer from my window
   The weather's warm and fair
   See all my friends are playing
   I'm going right out there
   It's autumn from my window
   And leaves are everywhere
   All red and brown and yellow
   They're flying through the air
   It's winter from my window
   The wind howls everywhere
   That's frost upon the windows
   And snow is in the air.

Science:

4. The students will go on a nature walk and collect things that represent spring.

5. Discuss new beginnings and names for baby animals. (Example: pup, colt, chick and fawn.)
Day 7

Beyond continued:

Math:
1. The teacher will give students daisies.
2. The students will look for symmetry in the flower.
3. The students will get in groups of ten and add all their petals to make a total for the group.

Science:
4. The students will learn the different parts of a flower.

Art:
5. The students will make May baskets.
6. The students will paint a mural depicting spring.

Day 8

Concepts:
1. All living things rely on the seasons.

Into:
1. The class will discuss summer activities.

Through:

The teacher will read Oasis of the Stars, an Egyptian story.
Beyond:

Science:
1. The teacher will show the students different types of cacti that grow in the desert.
2. The class will discuss which states have problems with droughts.
3. The students will work in small cooperative groups and come with some ways to help the drought.

Math:
4. Daily, the students will take a temperature reading and graph the results.

Art:
5. The students will paint a dessert scenery and label the different types of cacti.
6. The students will make sand paintings.

Cooking:
7. The students will cook hot dogs by putting the hot dogs on a piece of foil and putting them in the sun.

Day 9

Concepts:
1. All living things rely on the seasons.
2. Organisms change as the seasons change.
Into:
1. The teacher will bring in different leaves and the students will discuss the differences and similarities.
2. The teacher will ask the students what "change" means.
3. The teacher will list the responses on the board.

Through:
The teacher will read *The Stranger*.

Beyond:

*Social Studies*:
1. The class will discuss the word "harvest."
2. The class will have a harvest festival by bringing the fruit, vegetables and grains of their choice.

*Science*:
3. The students will research why leaves change colors.
4. The students will go out and collect different color leaves.

*Math*:
5. The students will sort their leaves by color, size and shape and graph results.

*Art*:
6. The students will make watercolor leaf prints.
Day 10

_Culminating Activity:_

To wrap up the unit on seasons, the students will apply what they have learned with more of a "hands on" approach. We will go on a field trip to the Riverside Community College's Planetarium. The students will view what actually makes the seasons change.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX B

WEATHER
RATIONALE:

The purpose of this unit is to teach students about the elements of nature. The elements of nature in this unit are rain, wind, and snow. Students need to learn that the elements of nature are necessary forces that keep the delicate balance of the earth in line. All life depends upon the elements of nature for their survival. Although the forces of nature seem destructive at times, their presence is necessary in order for nature to rebuild and restructure itself.

The purpose of the Weather unit is to communicate and solidify the following concepts. These concepts being:

1. All elements of nature go through change.
2. The atmosphere creates many changes.
3. All living things depend on the cycles of weather.

EVALUATION:

Informal and formal discussion will be used as an ongoing process. This can be done as a whole class or in small groups. Students will keep personal as well as self-evaluative journals throughout the unit. Reader response, teacher observations and anecdotal records will be used as a means of evaluation.

Day 1

Concepts:
1. All elements of nature go through change.
2. The atmosphere creates many changes.
3. All living things depend on the cycles of weather.
Into:
1. The class will make a list of the different types of weather they know about.
2. The students will draw a picture of their favorite type of weather.
3. The students will read *Weather*.

Through:
The teacher will read *Look At Weather*.

Beyond:

*Math:*
1. The students will keep a weather graph in the classroom. Each day the students will record what type of weather is occurring. At the end of the unit the students will observe the type of weather that occurred most frequently.

*Social Studies:*
2. The students will be given a map of the United States and will have to research which states have more rainfall, snow, wind and sun. They will color each of the states differently according to the local weather.
3. The students will create their own map legend to go along with their maps.

*Science:*
4. The students will start and record their own weather journal.
Day 2

**Beyond continued:**

*Language Arts:*

1. In small groups, students will choose the book of their choice to read. The choices are: *Weather, Read About Weather, Just Look at Weather* and *Weather Forecasting*.
2. When the students are finished reading they will write about what they learned in their literature response journals.

*Social Studies/Language Arts:*

3. Students will, in cooperative groups, research more on the indicated topic and write and present a group report.

*Cooking:*

4. The students will make their own tornadoes by stirring and making chocolate milk.

Day 3

**Concepts:**

1. All elements of nature go through change.
2. The atmosphere creates many changes.
3. All living things depend on the cycles of weather.

**Into:**

1. The class will discuss why it rains, how it rains and why rain is necessary.
2. The teacher will list all responses on chart paper and post it in the room.
3. The teacher will read *What Makes it Rain?*
4. The class will discuss the cycle of water.
Through:
The teacher will read to the class Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs.

Beyond:

Language Arts:
1. The students will create their own food/rain book based after the story.

Art:
2. Students will paint a scene depicting rain with q-tips.

Day 4
Concepts:
1. All elements of nature go through change.
2. The atmosphere creates many changes.
3. All living things depend on the cycles of weather.

Into:
1. The class will discuss erosion and its effects.
2. The class will discuss the destruction of weather.

Through:
The teacher will read Come a Tide.
Beyond:

Science:
1. The class will discuss how floods can be destructive.
2. Discuss elevation and its effects of possible flooding in lower elevations.
3. Discuss mudslides in California.
4. In small groups, students will collect a pan of mud and create landscapes with different elevations. Then the students will pour water on the highest elevations and observe the changes that occur.
5. Each group will present their findings.

Science/Math:
6. The students will measure the volume of water that was necessary for change to occur in their science project.

Cooking:
7. Students will make a mudpie out of oreo cookies and chocolate pudding.

Day 5

Beyond continued:

Music:
1. The students will go outside and gather materials that they feel will make good instruments to create the sound of a rainstorm.
2. Students will come back in the room and compose a song in groups. All groups will practice together.
Language Arts:

3. Students will read Splash silently to themselves.

4. The class will discuss the different places that Splash encounters.

5. The students will make their own Splash books and write about the adventures of Splash.

6. The teacher will read two Indian poems about rain.

Day 6

Concepts:

1. All elements of nature go through change.

2. The atmosphere creates many changes.

3. All living things depend on the cycles of weather.

Into:

1. The teacher will read Caught in the Rain.

2. The class will discuss ways we can protect ourselves from the rain.

3. Out of construction paper, the students will make their own types of umbrellas.

4. The teacher will read the poem "Rain" by Shel Silverstein.

Through:

The teacher will read the story Bringing Rain to Kapiti Plain.
Beyond:

Social Studies:
1. The class will discuss the importance of rain to the Indians.
2. Students will be given a map of the United States and will locate the different Native American tribes.

Music:
3. The students will perform an American Native raindance.

Day 7
Beyond continued:

Science:
4. The teacher will demonstrate a science experiment on how to make rain. A nine by thirteen pan filled with ice will be held over a pot of boiling water. The students will observe how cold air condenses because of the hot water vapor and how this process creates rain.

Concepts:
1. All elements of nature go through change.
2. The atmosphere creates many changes.

Into:
1. The class will discuss the properties of water.
2. The teacher will demonstrate the different properties by boiling water and freezing water.

Through:
The teacher will read The Snowy Day.
Beyond:

Art/Language Arts:

1. The students will create snowflakes and on the them write a poem of their choice depicting winter. The students will then choose a winter word for each of the letters of their title. Example:
   
   I  Igloo
   
   C  Crisp
   
   E  Earmuffs

Drama:

2. The students will pantomime their favorite part of the story while the class guesses the part they are acting.

Day 8

Concepts:

1. All elements of nature go through change.
2. The atmosphere creates many changes.

Into:

1. The class will review the cycle of water.
2. The class will compare and contrast fresh water and salt water.

Through:

The teacher will read to the class From Sea to Salt.
Beyond:

Science:

1. The students will observe over a period of time the evaporation of salt water. The teacher will describe that the salt does not evaporate from the water even though the salt in the water is not visible.

2. Each group will be given a cup of salt water and measure the amount of evaporation occurring. The groups will write down the information on a daily basis.

Concepts:

1. All elements of nature go through change.

2. The atmosphere creates many changes.

Into:

1. The class will review the term condensation and how water vapor forms clouds.

2. The students will share the experiences they have encountered in the fog.

Through:

The teacher will read to the class *It Looked Like Spilt Milk*.

Day 9

Beyond:

Language Arts:

1. The students will make *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* books. The students will create images by pouring paint in the middle of the paper and folding the paper in half.
Science:

2. The teacher will describe the different types of clouds.

3. The students will create a bulletin board by making different types of clouds out of cotton. The four different cloud types will include: Cumulus, Cirrus, Nimbus and Stratus.

4. The students will go outside and go on a cloud watch.

5. The class will discuss thunderstorms.

6. The teacher will read Flash, Crash, Rumble, and Roll.

Music:

7. Students will be given instruments and make the sound of thunder. The students will perform their sounds in rounds.

Drama:

8. The students will write their own weather forecast. The students will perform a weather forecast as if they were real weather forecasters for a television station. The teacher will video tape the performance.
Day 10

Concepts:
1. All elements of nature go through change.
2. The atmosphere creates many changes.

Into:
1. The teacher will ask students how wind is created. The teacher will list all the responses on chart paper.
2. In small groups, the students will brainstorm and write how they know when it is windy because they actually can not see the wind.

Through:
The teacher will read *What Makes the Wind*.

Beyond:

Art:
1. The students will construct kites. They will take the kites out and fly them.

Language Arts:
2. After flying their kites, the students will write a creative story about their kite.
3. The students will watch the video "Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day."
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Domanska, J. (1971). If all the seas were one sea. New York: The Macmillan Company.


RATIONALE:

The purpose of this unit is to teach children about our world and the living things that are important to the world. Students need to learn that the natural wonders of the universe all fit together and every living specie has a purpose. The students also need to realize that every specie relies on each other in order to survive. Understanding nature will help students respect and take care of our world. They need to associate themselves as a part of nature. Students need to grow up knowing that they make a difference in what happens to our world and that they can help protect and restore our world. They are our future.

The purpose of the Apple unit is to communicate and solidify the following concepts. These concepts are:

1. Animals and insects rely on plants.
2. All living things rely on each other in order to survive.
3. Trees are part of the living world and change through the seasons.
4. All living things in this world change.

EVALUATION:

Informal and formal discussion will be used as an ongoing process. Quatro books, story towers and drawings will be used as means of evaluation. Student writings and self evaluations will also be used. The self evaluation will ask the students what they had hoped to learn and what they had actually learned. Observational notes and individual personal journals will also be used.
Day 1

Concepts:
1. Animals and insects rely on plants
2. All living things rely on each other in order to survive.

Into:
1. Discuss what living means.
2. Ask the students how are they different from living things?
3. Discuss living things that the students already know.
4. Students will draw pictures of living insects and animals and what the animals and insects might eat.
5. Students will share their drawings with each other and present the drawings to the rest of the class.
6. The class will discuss the different animals and insects the students drew and the teacher will write all the students' responses on the board.
   Students will be in pairs of two and the teacher will give each pair an apple to observe.
1. Students will write how the apple feels, smells, and looks.
2. Discuss the similarities and differences of the students' responses.
3. Teacher will read Winter Harvest.
4. Discuss how the deers rely and need the apples to survive.
5. Ask, "What kind of other food can you think of that the deers might rely on?"
6. Teacher will write responses on the board.
7. Students will start a personal journal. This journal will continue everyday throughout the unit.
Through:

Teacher will read *Apple Tree.*

Discuss what animals and insects were in the story.

Ask the students how the animals and insects depend on the apple tree.

Day 2

Beyond:

Science:

1. Each student has an apple. Each student observes the apple and writes how that apple is important to the other animals.

Art:

2. Students will paint an apple tree with an animal or insect near the tree and the illustrations will show how the animal or insect depends on the apple tree.

Language Arts:

3. Read the poem "The Apple."

   Up in the apple tree,
   High off the ground, (look up and point)
   I see an apple (hand over eyes)
   So big and round. (shape circle with hands)
   I climb up the tree,
   And hold on tight. (pretend to climb)
   I pick that apple (pick apple)
   And take a big bite! (take bite)
4. Apple graph list. Students will graph the smells, feel, tastes, looks, and sounds of an apple.

Math:

5. Measure apples.

6. Estimate how many teddy bear counters will be needed in order to equal an apple.
   Students will use the scale to find out the answer.

Day 3

Beyond continued:

Teacher will read Ten Apples on Top.

Music and Math:

1. Pocket chart and song. Students will sing a counting song from the words in the pocket chart.

2. Students will make their own songs in small groups by substituting apples with anything else they choose.

3. Students will write the new songs on chart paper so the entire class can sing and join in.

Concepts:

1. Animals and insects rely on plants.

2. Trees are part of the living world.

3. All living things in this world change.
Into:
1. The teacher will read *The Seasons of Arnold's Tree*.
2. Discuss the different seasons.
3. Make a quatro book sequencing the four different seasons.
   The book will include a tree and the changes of the tree through the four seasons. A quatro book is like a sequencing book that has four sections.
4. The class will discuss the different activities of each season.
5. Students will draw their favorite season and an activity that would go with the season they chose.

Through:
The teacher will read *The Giving Tree*.
Discuss the changes the boy and the tree go through.

Beyond:
1. Discuss how living things grow.
2. Discuss the sequencing events of a growing child.
3. Students will write the process of growing up.

Art:
4. Paint "giving trees".
Day 4

Beyond continued:

Language Arts:

1. Make a class book. One page from each child. The book will be modeled from The Giving Tree. (Example, Come boy, play on my branches.)

Science and Social Studies:

2. Discuss the elections and the issue of the Redwood trees. Students will write their own solutions on how to solve the problem in small groups. Have a vote in the class.
3. Discuss forest fires. Natural causes vs. non-natural.
4. Discuss the disruptions of nature (animals and insects) when a forest fire occurs.

Concepts:

1. Animals and insects rely on plants.
2. All living things rely on each other in order to survive.
3. Trees are part of the living world and change through the seasons.
4. All living things in this world change.

Into:

The teacher will read Trees.

1. Discuss the uses of trees.
2. Students will get in groups of four and brainstorm all the different things we use from trees.
3. Teacher will ask the groups to report back and the teacher will write all responses on the board.
Through:
The teacher will read *This is a Tree.*
Discuss tree holes found in trees and the purposes of the holes. Talk about the insects that live in the bark and the birds that build nests in the trees.

Beyond:

*Science:*
1. Take a nature walk on campus and observe trees.
2. Students will see if there are any nests or insects.
3. Discuss the colors of the trees and the season in which the observation is taking place.

*Science and Math:*
4. In cooperative groups students will plant apple trees. Each group will be responsible to record the of the trees. This will be an on going process throughout the year.

Day 5

*Beyond continued*
1. The students will watch the video "Let Me See." The video discusses and illustrates the plant growth cycle. The video also describes the ecosystem of ponds.
2. The students will make storytowers on growth. A storytower is a piece of paper folded into a triangle that sequences the story events from beginning, middle and end.
Concepts:
1. Animals and insects rely on plants.
2. All living things rely on each other in order to survive.
3. All living things in this world change.

Into:
1. The students will name some things that can be made from apples.
2. The teacher will list responses on the board.
3. The class will discuss how applesauce is made.
4. The whole class will discuss the different types of apples.

Through:
The teacher will read *Rain Makes Applesauce*.

Beyond:

*Language Arts:*
1. The students will make a nonsense book about how applesauce is made.

*Homework:*
2. Bring in an apple for tomorrow.
3. Study lines for a Johnny Appleseed play.
Day 6

**Beyond continued:**

*Math:*

1. Graph all the apples that were brought in by colors.
2. The teacher will graph children's favorite apples.
3. Each student will predict how many apple seeds are in each apple.
4. Teacher and parent helpers will slice apples for the students.
5. Students will count how many seeds in each apple.
6. The teacher will graph in order to find the total number of apple seeds.
7. Teacher will use apple slices to teach and reinforce fractions.

*Art:*

8. Students will make apple prints from sliced apples using paints.

*Cooking:*

9. The class will make applesauce.

*Performing Arts:*

10. Students will rehearse a Johnny Appleseed play.

Day 7

**Concepts:**

1. Trees are part of the living world.
2. All living things in this world change.
Into:
1. Class will discuss how an apple tree grows.
2. Teacher will discuss the cycle, seed to plant.
3. Students will sequence an apple tree's growth by making quatro books.
4. Students will read and share their books.

Through:
Teacher will Johnny Appleseed.
Discuss the history and growth of apple trees.
Discuss the legend of Johnny Appleseed.

Beyond:
1. The class will discuss how other trees grow.
2. Discuss how plants and flowers grow.
3. Teacher will read Discovering Trees.

Science:
4. Lima bean observations. Students will observe lima beans after they have been soaked in water.
5. Students will look at the parts of an apple blossom. The teacher will discuss new vocabulary (petals, pistils, stamens and sepals).

Performing Arts:
6. Rehearse the Johnny Appleseed play.
Music:
7. Musical apple game from the song "Found an Apple".
   (Sung to the tune of "My Darling Clementine")
   
   Found an apple, found an apple,
   Found an apple on a tree.
   I was napping, just catnapping,
   Underneath the apple tree.
   Then it hit me, then it hit me,
   As the apple fell on me.
   I discovered, yes discovered,
   Newton's law of gravity.

Day 8
Beyond continued:

Language Arts:
1. Provide students with an apple shape and have the students write a cinquain poem.
2. Students will read their poems and teacher will display.

Performing Arts:
3. Perform the Johnny Appleseed play for the school and the parents.

Day 9

Concepts:
1. Animals and insects rely on plants.
2. All living things rely on each other in order to survive.
3. Trees are part of the living world and change through the seasons.
Into:
1. Teacher will ask "Where do apples come from?"
2. Teacher will ask "What kind of conditions or climates do farmers need in order to grow apples?"
3. Ask "How do apples get to the marker?"

Through:
The teacher will read *Apples and Pumpkins*.

Beyond:

*Social Studies:*
1. The class will discuss the states that grow apples.
2. Discuss why apples can grow in these states.
3. The students will list the leading states that grow apples.
4. The teacher will give students a blank map and in small groups they will color in those states.

*Language Arts:*
5. The students will make a class apple book.

*Art:*
6. The students will draw pictures of six different types of fruit trees.
   The class will discuss pesticides.

*Cooking:*
7. The class will make apple pie. The teacher will bake the pie at home so the class can eat it the day.
Day 10

*Culminating Activities:*

*Field trip:*

Go on a field trip to "Four Oaks Ranch". Students will watch how apple cider is made and they will go on a tractor ride through the apple orchards. When we come back from the field trip, we will drink the cider and eat apple pie.

*Game:*

Bobbing for apples. The apples will hang from a table with string and the children must bite the apples without using their hands.

*Social Studies:*

The class will brainstorm ideas on how we can help protect our environment from chemical spraying, building, clearing land, chopping trees for supplies and forest fires.

*Music:*

The class will sing "I Love Apples".
*(Sung to the tune "You Are My Sunshine")*

I love red apples. I love red apples.  
And I could eat them every day.  
I love the sweet ones and I love tart ones.  
Apples keep the doctor away.  
I love all apples. I love all apples.  
And I could eat them every day.  
I love the sweet ones and I love tart ones.  
Please don't take my apples away.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anonymous. "Found an apple". Handout.
Anonymous, "The apple". Handout.
Hutchins, R. (1964). This is a tree. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company.
CRAWLING THINGS

APPENDIX D
RATIONALE:

The purpose of this unit is to teach students about our world and the living things that are important to the world. Students need to learn that the natural wonders of the universe all fit together and every living species has a purpose. Students also need to know that every species rely on each other in order to survive. Crawling things are seen as part of the beginning of the food cycle. This unit will teach students that crawling things are important to the world and necessary in order to carry out the delicate balance of nature.

The purpose of the Crawling Things unit is to communicate and solidify the following concepts. These concepts are:

1. All living things rely on each other in order to survive.
2. All living things go through change.
3. All living things are unique and different.

EVALUATION:

Informal and formal discussion will be used as an ongoing process. This can be done as a whole class or in small groups. Students will keep personal as well as self-evaluative journals throughout the unit. Reader response, teacher observation and anecdotal records will be used as means of evaluation.

Day 1

Concepts:

1. All living things go through change.
2. All living things rely on each other in order to survive.


**Into:**
1. All the insects books will be displayed around the room.
2. Ask students what the books are about and discuss responses.
3. The class will discuss the growth process of human beings, from baby to adult. Then the class will discuss the growth cycle of insects. Teacher will introduce this type of change as metamorphosis.

**Through:**
The teacher will read to the students: *The Hungry Caterpillar.*
The class will discuss how much a caterpillar has to eat in order to go through metamorphosis.

**Beyond:**

*Language Arts:*
Everyday, the teacher will read a chapter from *Charlotte's Web.*
1. Talk about the caterpillar. Ask students if caterpillars eat and eat and eat. Do they grow quickly? How are they different from you and I?

*Science*
2. Students will make two collages. One of people food. The other will consist of caterpillar food.
3. Make caterpillar puppets and create their own *Hungry Caterpillar* books.
Day 2

Beyond continued:

Math:

1. Students will draw a caterpillar and break the caterpillar up into eight different segments using an inch ruler. Then students will make up their own math problems in each segment.
2. The teacher will make a graph on the different foods the caterpillar eats. The students will pretend they are caterpillars and choose their favorite food and place it on the graph.

Concepts:

1. All living things change.
2. All living things are unique and different.

Into:

1. Students will discuss everything they know about a caterpillar.
2. Students will break up in small groups and write a list of what they know, and what they want to know about caterpillars.

Through:

The teacher will read Caterpillars and How They Live.

Beyond:

Language Arts/Science:

1. Students will observe and keep an ongoing journal on the cycle of a caterpillar by observing silkworms in the classroom.
2. Students will look at a map of China and locate the country on a world map in small groups.
Art:

3. Students will glue yarn on a piece of cardboard in patterns to create a caterpillar or silkworm.

Day 3

Concepts:
1. All living things go through change.
2. All living things are unique and different.

Into
1. Students will draw a picture of the butterfly they would like to be.
2. The class will discuss the differences of each students' drawings.

Through:
Students will read in small groups *I Wish I Were A Butterfly*.

Beyond:

*Language Arts:*
1. Students will write what is unique about themselves.
2. Students will create a mini-book called "What's Unique About Me?"

*Social Studies:*
3. Students will discuss the differences among themselves while the teacher makes list on the board.
4. Class discussion: Class will discuss things about themselves that they would like to change. Discussion will lead to an awareness on how all people have something unique and special to share with the world.
Science:

5. List and label the parts of a butterfly.

6. Discuss why butterflies are important for pollination.

Language Arts:

7. Teacher will read Darkness and the Butterfly.

Day 4

Beyond continued:

Art:

1. Students will make stain glass butterflies out of tissue paper.

Music:

2. The whole class will create a butterfly song

Science:

3. Students will be given materials to make a butterfly. The class will go on a nature walk and camouflage their butterflies on trees and surrounding environment. They will then try to locate other students' butterflies.

4. Discuss reasons why insects camouflage with the environment.

5. Do the predator/prey experiment:
   Hide ten pipe cleaners (ten of each color). Make a graph. Allow the students to begin searching for the colored pipe cleaners. Record the number of pipe cleaners to be found. Subtract the numbers, and list the remaining pipe cleaners as survivors.
The teacher will ask: What color was the easiest to find? How many survivors? What color was the hardest to find? And how many survivors? Does natural camouflage help the survival of insects?

Math:
6. In small groups, the students will create word problems from the information gathered on the graph.

Day 5
Concepts:
1. All living things change.
2. All living things are unique and different.
Into:
1. The class will discuss different feelings.
2. Discuss different actions to feelings and their consequences.
Through:
The teacher will read the story *The Grouchy Ladybug*.
Beyond:
Language Arts:
1. The students will write and illustrate their own books patterned after the book *The Grouchy Ladybug*.
Math:
2. The students will multiply the legs of ladybugs. Multiply the dots on ladybugs.
3. Estimate: How many aphids are in the jar?
Day 6

**Beyond continued:**

**Language Arts:**

1. Students will read their published books in the class in small groups. Students will choose what groups they would like to go to.
2. Students will write their own cinquain poems about ladybugs.

**Cooking:**

3. The students will make ladybug muffins. The students will need to use red frosting, raisins and licorice whips to create the ladybugs.

**Concepts:**

1. All living things rely on each other to survive.
2. All living things change.

**Into:**

Brainstorm ideas on how students think ladybugs develop. Teacher will list ideas on the board.
Day 7

Through:

Teacher will read Ladybug. The book discusses the life of a ladybug.

Beyond:

Science:

1. In small groups students will draw the different life cycles of a ladybug and label the different stages.
2. Students will name the different parts of a ladybug.

Language Arts:

3. Whole class will create a big book about ladybugs.

Art:

4. Students will make paper mache ladybugs.

Day 8

Concepts:

1. All things rely on each other in order to survive.
2. All living things are unique and different.
3. All living things change.

Into:

1. Discuss how spiders differ from ladybugs and caterpillars.
2. Discuss how important spiders are to the environment and how they are not insects but are arachnids.
Through:
The students will read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

Beyond:

*Drama:*
1. Students will choose groups to participate in and create a short play based on the book.
2. Students will perform the short play for the class.

*Science:*
3. The class will watch a video called "Inky, Dinky Spider."
4. After the video, the class will go out on a spider hunt.

*Music:*
5. Students will sing the song "Death of Mister Fly."

Day 9

**Beyond Continued:**

*Language Arts:*
1. Teacher will read the folktale *Anansi the Spider*.
2. Students will discuss why people make up tales.
3. The teacher will read another folktale entitled *Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears*.
4. Students will write the differences between the two tales.
5. Students will write their own folktales.

*Art:*
6. The class will make masks to go with their folktale stories.
Day 10

*Culminating Activity:*

The students will be given a hug roll of butcher paper and will create, any way they wanted, a mural depicting a world of crawling things. The only teacher stipulation is that the students must cover the entire paper with their artwork. The students will watch the video "Charlottes's Web."
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Howe, J. (1987). *I wish I were a butterfly*. San Diego: HBJ.


RATIONALE:

The purpose of this unit is to have students learn about sea life and come to the realization that the two different worlds of land and sea are actually quite similar. Students will notice that both worlds are made up of many different types of plants and animals living together. The students will learn that some fish are mammals and that some forms of sea life can be carnivores or herbivores and sometimes omnivorous. The students will also learn that each creature living in the sea has a special function and a particular role to fulfill. The activities in this unit will encompass both large and small group instruction. The unit is also designed to encourage students to become part of the decision making process.

The purpose of the Sea Life unit is to communicate and solidify the following concepts. These concepts are:

1. Sea life is interdependent.
2. The food chain must remain balanced to stabilize growth.
3. Sea life forms have special protective functions for survival.

EVALUATION:

The students will keep personal, self evaluative journals throughout the unit. Class discussion and small group participation will contribute to gathering ideas for class books, stories, and poems to be written about sea life. The students will also be performing a puppet show on their knowledge of the food chain.
Day 1

Concepts:

1. Sea life is interdependent.
2. The food chain must remain balanced to stabilize growth.
3. Sea life forms have special protective functions for survival.

Into:

1. All sea life books will be displayed around the room.
2. The teacher will ask the students what the books about.
3. Students will write what they know about sea life.
4. The class will discuss the word food chain and its possible meanings.

Through:

The teacher will read The Curious Clownfish.

The class will discuss the food chain that was presented in the book.

Beyond:

Math:

1. The students will draw a picture of their favorite fish on a small piece of paper and place their responses on a graph.

Language Arts:

2. The students will begin personal journals to be kept throughout the unit.
3. The teacher will read a chapter from The Cay to the class after lunch everyday throughout the unit.
4. The students will keep a literature response journal with pictures for The Cay to be kept throughout the unit.
Art:
5. The students will color a picture and watercolor over it to create an underwater theme.

Day 2
Concepts:
1. Sea life is interdependent.
2. The food chain must remain balanced to stabilize growth.
3. Sea life forms have special protective functions for survival.

Into:
1. Discuss what the students had for breakfast.
2. The teacher will ask where did it come from? The teacher will write responses on the board.
3. The class will discuss about how oceans have food chains just like we do on land.
   Discuss the human food chain.

Through:
The students will read The Oceans.

Beyond:
Social Studies:
1. The class will discuss the oceans ecology and the effect oil spills have on the ecosystem. In small cooperative groups, the students will come up with ways to keep these things from happening. The reporter of the group will report back to the class.
**Language Arts:**

2. The students will write a story as if they were an animal that was living where an oil spill had just happened. They will explain how they would live and survive and write about their feelings.

**Art:**

3. In small groups, students will make a mural on the food chain and discuss the mural with the class.

**Day 3**

**Beyond continued:**

1. The students will continue working on murals.

2. As the students complete their murals, they will begin making stick puppets on the food chain. They will decide in their groups which food chain parts they will use. The students will be reminded that they need to use a living organism from each part.

**Language Arts:**

3. In small groups the students will write a dialogue to go along with the stick puppets they created.
Day 4

Concepts:
1. Sea life is interdependent.
2. The food chain must remain balanced to stabilize growth.
3. Sea life forms have special protective functions for survival.

Into:
2. Students will examine a starfish.
3. The teacher will list on the board different responses students have about the starfish.
4. The class will discuss the word carnivore.

Through:
The teacher will read to the class *Exploring an Ocean Tide Pool*. The class will discuss animals that live in the tidepools, their special functions and how they got there.

Beyond:

*Math:
1. The students will study symmetry using a starfish as an example of a symmetrical object.

*Language Arts:
2. The students will write a Haiku poem on a starfish.

*Science/Art:
3. The students will create tide pool filmstrips with a partner by making a book with different actions on each page and then flipping the pages real fast to create action and movement.
Cooking:

4. The class will make starfish sandwiches with dolphin-safe tuna.

Science:

5. In small groups the students will discuss the purpose of echinoderms in the ocean and a reporter will report the group responses with the rest of the class.

Day 5

Concepts:

1. Sea life is interdependent.
2. The food chain must remain balanced to stabilize growth.
3. Sea life forms have special protective functions for survival.

Into:

1. The students will predict by dividing a paper in half and putting what they think a crab is on one half of the paper and drawing a picture to go along with their prediction.
2. The teacher will read *Kermit the Hermit*.
3. On the other half of the paper where the students predicted about they crab, they will write what a crab actually is and draw a picture to go along with their sentences.
Through:
The teacher will read *Why the Crab Has No Head*.
The class will discuss that the story is an African folktale.
The teacher will point out Africa on the map.
The class will talk about what folktales are.

Beyond:

*Language Arts*:

1. The students will write their own folktale about a sea creature and its special attribute.
   (Example: Why the squid has ink?)
2. The students will put their stories into a class book.
3. The students will write a cinquain poem about a crab.

*Science*:

4. The students will discuss the differences between a crab and a hermit crab and list the differences on the board.
5. The students will locate the physical features of the crab and write them down on a worksheet.

*Music*:

6. The class will sing "Under the Sea."
Day 6

Beyond continued:

Science:
1. The students will discuss how crabs fit into the foodchain.

Language Arts:
2. The students will be paired up with buddies and read "The Crab that Played with the Sea."

Geography:
3. When the students are finished reading they will list all the geographical locations discussed in the book. When the students are finished they will take their lists and record the crabs adventure onto a blank map.

Concepts:
1. Sea life is interdependent.
2. Sea life forms have special protective functions for survival.

Into:
1. The teacher will put the word "mullusks" on the board and discuss its meaning.
2. The teacher will ask the following questions to the class:
   a. How many have been to the ocean and found a shell?
   b. How many have been to the ocean and found a shell with an animal inside?
   c. How many have seen snails and slugs? Do they have bones?

Discuss the answers.

Through:

The teacher will read the I Was All Thumbs.

The class will discuss the special features of an octopus that the book discussed.
Beyond:

Homework:

1. The students will bring in snails for the class the next day.

Day 7

Language Arts:

1. The teacher will read the book Slugs.

Math:

2. With the snails brought in from homework, the students will estimate how much a snail weighs and then weigh it and graph the results.

3. The students will estimate how long it will take a snail to go across the desk.

4. The students will let the snail go and time it and then graph the results.

Language Arts:

5. The students will write their own book in groups patterned after Slugs.

Science:

6. The students will dissect their own squid with the help of older students and parents, doing it step by step with the teacher.

7. The students will put certain parts on an index card and write their names with the ink from the squid.

Cooking:

8. With the help of volunteers, the students will cook up their squid and eat it.
Day 8

Concepts:

1. Sea life is interdependent.
2. The food chain must remain balanced to stabilize growth.
3. Sea life forms have special protective functions for survival.

Into:

1. The teacher will ask the class how fish swim and the teacher will write the responses on the board.
2. The teacher will make a list of the fish that students are familiar with.

Through:

The teacher will read the book *Fish is Fish*.

Beyond:

*Science*:

1. The teacher will ask, Why do fish have to stay in water?
2. The students will name the different parts of the fish and their specific purposes.

*Art*:

3. The students will make fish rubbings on a teeshirt.

*Language Arts*:

4. The students will make a book patterned after *Brown Bear Brown Bear*. Example;
   Little fish, little fish what do you see? I see a ---- looking at me. (The class will have previously read the book)
5. The class will watch the video "The Little Mermaid."
Day 9

Concepts:
1. Sea life is interdependent.
2. The food chain must remain balanced to stabilize growth.
3. Sea life forms have special protective functions for survival.

Into:
1. The class will watch the video "Humphrey the Lost Whale... A True Story."

Through:
The teacher will read the book *Little Whale*.

Beyond:

Science:
1. The class will discuss the word migration and what it means.
2. Discuss which different mammals in the ocean migrate.

Math:
3. The teacher will tally the classes favorite ocean mammal on a chart and count by fives.

Music:
4. The class will read and sing *Baby Beluga*.

Science:
5. The students, after discussing ocean mammals, will create a Venn Diagram to determine which descriptions fit whales only or which apply to fish only and those descriptions that fit both.
Social Studies:

6. The students will label different oceans on a blank map.

7. The class will discuss whales that have been in danger and how people have worked together to save them.

Day 10

Culminating Activity:

To wrap up the unit on sea life, the students will apply what they have learned with more of a "hands on" approach. We will travel to Dana Point to explore the many tide pools that offer an abundance of sea life for examination. The day will conclude with a whale watching excursion off the Dana Point coast.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


RATIONALE:

Family is an important part of each student's life. Each student has their own family traditions and cultural differences that can be shared through this unit. Each child can be successful and gain a deeper appreciation for their family. The children will need family involvement throughout this unit.

Activities in the unit will include both small and large group instruction. It will encourage student choice, to help build decision making skills. They will actively participate in writing, listening, and speaking in relation to the topic.

The purpose of the Family unit is to communicate and solidify the following concepts. These concepts are:

1. Families come in many forms.
2. Families are a group of people that care about each other.
3. Each of us belong to a family with different roles and responsibilities.

EVALUATION:

Student writing in the form of books, journals, and stories will be evaluated. Class discussions, as well as informal conversations amongst the students will be used to assess student understanding of the material. The students' self-evaluation will be through personal journals kept throughout the unit.
Day 1

Concepts:

1. Each of us belongs to a family in different roles and with different responsibilities.

Into:

1. The word "FAMILY" will be written on the board.
2. The students will brainstorm all they know about family.
3. The class will prepare a web on the board.
4. Family related books will be displayed on the chalk tray.

Through:

The teacher will read the book All I Am to the class.

The class will divide into small groups to discuss the qualities each of them have. Each child has a chance to share within the group. The students will be given a journal to be used as a personal journal. This will be an ongoing part of the unit.

Beyond:

Language Arts:

1. Each student will make their own All I Am book.
2. The students will write a letter to their parents regarding the new unit of study. The letter will inform parents that the students will need their help during the unit.

Homework:

3. The students will bring in a baby picture of themselves.
Day 2

Concepts:

1. Each of us belongs to a family in different roles and with different responsibilities.

Into:

1. The teacher will leave a decorated shoebox in front of the classroom for the students to put their baby pictures in.

Through:

The teacher will read Babies.

Beyond:

Centers:

1. The students will have a chance to write in their journals, draw a picture of themselves as a baby and guess which baby picture belongs to whom.
2. Two mothers with young babies will share the babies with the class. The students will have an opportunity to ask questions. The siblings will have a chance to ask questions. The siblings will have a chance to share their feelings with the class.

Math:

3. In pairs, the students will measure their hands, feet and heads. The mothers will measure the babies hands, feet and head. The students will compare and contrast the difference.

Art:

4. The class will make a mural of hand and footprints.
Day 3

Concepts:
1. Families come in many forms.
2. Families are a group of people that care about each other.
3. Each of us belong to a family with different roles and responsibilities.

Beyond continued:
1. Students continue working on *All I Am* books. The students will share the finished product with the class.
2. The students will watch a video called "Free to be you and me."

Music:
3. The class will sing "Everything grows."

Into:
1. The class will discuss the number of siblings each student has.
2. Discuss students' experiences with their siblings.

Through:
The teacher will read the story *The Black Snowman*. The class will discuss the story.

Beyond:

Math:
1. The students will graph how many brothers and sisters the class has as a total. They will count them. The students will graph the oldest, middle, youngest, and only children.
Social Studies:

2. Map: Where is Africa? The teacher will ask students where they come from.

   Homework:

3. The students will ask their parents about their family's roots.

Day 4
Concepts:

1. Families come in many forms.
2. Families are a group of people that care about each other.

Into:

1. Sharing time- the students share where their family is from. The teacher will mark all the responses on the board.

Through:

The teacher will read Angel Child, Dragon Child.
The class will compare the story with The Black Snowman.

Beyond:

Language Arts:

1. The students will write in their literature response journals.
2. The students will share ideas with a small group.
3. Continue in small groups. Share about any time you many have felt different from everyone else.
Dance:
4. The teacher will teach the class a cultural dance.

Music:
5. The class will listen and sing the song "A World Is A Rainbow."

Day 5
Concepts:
1. Families come in many forms.
2. Families are a group of people that care about each other.
3. Each of us belong to a family with different roles and responsibilities.

Into:
1. The teacher will show the class the cover of the book *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*. Read the cover.
2. Discuss that it is an African tale. Ask what other book have we read that had references to Africa? (*The Black Snowman*)

Through:
The teacher will read *The Keeping Quilt*. Discuss the story.

Beyond:
1. The teacher will relate that the quilt in the story has been passed down from generation to generation. The black snowman tale had been passed down from generation to generation.
2. Each student can make a family quilt that is representative of their family. This will be made out of small pieces of white sheets that the students decorate.

*Homework:*

3. The students will talk to family members. They will find out what they can make to symbolize each member of the family.

Day 6

*Concepts:*

1. Each of us belong to a family with different roles and responsibilities.

*Into:*

1. The teacher will ask: How many students have a mom that goes to work? How many students have a mom that stays home?

*Through:*

The teacher will read *The Terrible Thing That Happened At Our House.*

*Beyond:*

1. The teacher will read *The Piggybook.*

*Science:*

2. Pigs. The students will use the Piggybook for reference to pigs.

*Drama:*

3. The students will act out the Piggybook in groups of four.
Language Arts:

4. In small groups, the students will talk about jobs that they have at home.
   Discuss: Why do they have these jobs? Do they get paid for doing them? Discuss the positive and negatives of having jobs.

5. The reporter will report back to the class.

6. The class will begin My Family is special books. These will continue through the rest of the unit.

Day 7

Concepts:

1. Families come in many forms.

Into:

1. The students will look through magazines for pictures from different countries.

2. The class will make a collage using the pictures they have found.

3. The class will discuss what country the people may be from.

4. Any students in the class from other countries that have something to share about their country can share.

5. Discuss if any students' parents come from different countries.

Through:

The teacher will read How My Parents Learned to Eat.
Beyond:

Cooking:
1. The class will cook rice. The teacher will bring in chopsticks for the class to eat with.

Social Studies:
2. The class will find Japan on the map. Discuss where it is located in the world. Discuss the different greetings used in the book; handshake and bow.
3. Free time for the students to work on whatever project they choose. (Examples: family quilt, music, reading stories.)
4. Guest in the class. A parent of one of the students who is from another country but married to an American.

Day 8

Concepts:
1. Families come in many forms.
2. Families are a group of people that care about each other.
3. Each of us belong to a family with different roles and responsibilities.

Into:
1. The teacher will show that class a picture of her parents. Ask them questions to find out who they think the picture is of.
2. The teacher will explain that they are her parents.
3. Talk about grandparents.
4. The teacher will make a web of the students responses to the word grandparents.
Through:
The teacher will read *Wednesday Surprise*.

Beyond:

*Language Arts:*

1. The students will read the poem "Grandpa".
2. The class will compare the language in the poem to the web on the board.

*Art:*

3. Students may draw a picture of their grandparents or draw or paint a picture for their grandparents.

*Science:*

4. Discuss how all things grow old. The students will read *The Giving Tree* in small groups.

*Homework:*

5. The students will interview the oldest person in the family.

Day 9

*Concepts:*

1. Families are a group of people that care about each other.
2. Families come in many forms.

*Into:*

The teacher will read the book *The Relative Came*.
Beyond:

**Language Arts:**

1. The students will write about an experience that they had with their relatives.
2. Students will make an invitation to take home inviting family members to the end of the unit "Social".
3. Free time to finish up any work that needs to be completed.

**Social Studies:**

4. The students will discuss family trees. The teacher will demonstrate her family tree.
5. For homework, the students will create their family trees with the help of their parents.

**Music:**

6. The class will practice singing the songs that they have learned for tomorrow. (Free to be you and me. The world is a rainbow. Everything grows.)

**Art:**

7. The students will paint large pictures of their family.
Day 10

*Culminating Activity:*

The students will invite family members to share in the celebration of families. Each student will be encouraged to bring a family member and a family heirloom, or item that has been passed down from generation to generation. The students will have an opportunity to share these with their classmates. After the class finishes sharing they will have a family luncheon. Each student will bring in their family's favorite food! The class will perform the songs that they have learned and practiced for their families. Each student shall present their family with the quilt they have made.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


