

**How Did They Get There:
A Multicultural Look at Heroes through History and Literature**

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INTRODUCTION

My students are an interesting group of people because they are all different. They bring with them their beauty and joy, their pain and angst, and their dreams and desires. What's more is that these things are always changing. A student can seem vague and uninspired and then all of a sudden he or she will come up with some incredible insight, which is to me like a window, which shows the potential that lies within. Another student can appear very clever in what they do or say but then they will come up with something that might leave me wondering just what is going on inside their heads. I had one student who was nearly always very silly and immature but when he would write responses to text he often had something quick witted and insightful to say. Another student who was fairly new to the class appeared thoughtful and mature (he shook his head at some of the other student's behavior). But one day when I was talking to him at lunch he told me how at his last school he put a girl who had been bothering him in the trashcan. The students I have at the beginning of the year are never the same as they are at the end of the year because they grow academically, and mature so much.

As a high school reading teacher, I have the opportunity to challenge my students to develop a love of reading. I want to help my students to improve their reading comprehension and to develop their vocabulary. Ideally, I want to help them to see how their lives can be more complete through exposure to ideas. Most of my students are considered "at risk." Many have failed a grade somewhere through their educational histories. Some have a child or children of their own. Too many either do not have parents or have only one parent. None come from a home where reading is given much value.

With this unit I will help my students in many ways. Students will look at heroes from different cultures. In doing so they will develop a greater understanding of the people around them. With greater understanding they may come less prejudiced and develop more sensitivity to others. This will help my students not only as they proceed through high school but when they graduate and go out into the world as well. I have seen my students laugh at people who are different from them. This is not only harmful to the people who are being laughed at, but it is harmful to the students who are doing the laughing. It reduces them and shows their lack of education, understanding and compassion. If they continue this kind of behavior as adults, then their opportunities will be diminished both in the workplace as well as in their private lives.

This unit will encompass both fiction and nonfiction which makes for reading a wide variety of texts. The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills requires students to be able to read a variety of texts with similar themes and then be able to demonstrate an ability to tie the ideas from each piece into a coherent whole. By providing my students with a variety of texts on the same topic,

they will be able to practice their ability to see threads running through different texts and develop a solid comment on that thread. By teaching my students to annotate, use context clues and read actively, they will be able to better understand the texts in their other classes.

We all see heroes around us and they make us feel good about our world. Teenagers look up to various people they model their lives after as they try to figure out who they are becoming. They may attempt to act like a famous music or sports entertainer for a while in an effort to find a sense of self that they are comfortable with. Teenagers especially need realistic heroes to look up to as anchors or role models as they examine their own capabilities. My students, like all teenagers, are at a time in their lives when they are trying to figure out who they are and where they fit in the grand scheme of things. They look outward as well as inward to figure out who they are.

This unit will initially focus my student's attention outward as they look at different real and fictional heroes. I hope that, as they progress through the unit, they will become reflective and introspective about how their everyday actions have an impact on the world around them. I want my students to see how you can better yourself even if you come from humble beginnings. I want them to appreciate their ability to make a difference in other peoples lives. I want them to see how their actions, even small and seemingly insignificant actions, can impact the world around them. To do this, students will look at the renowned Indian leader Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in Christopher Martin's book *Mohandas Gandhi*, a fictional female Chinese hero named Ailin Tao from *Ties That Bind, Ties That Break* by Lensey Namioka and the fictional hero Tita from *Like Water For Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel.

Before each book, students will have to do pre-reading to provide a context from which an understanding of cultural differences can develop. Students cannot truly have an appreciation for what Gandhi did unless they have some understanding of Indian culture. The same is true of the Chinese cultures. Pre-Reading will include research on the culture discussed through the Internet as well as through books. Students will also read folktales of the culture under discussion to further students' understanding. Once students have completed their survey of the heroes illustrated in the books listed they will do their own research to find the heroes who live in their own community. This might be a religious leader, a family member, a political/civic leader or perhaps even one of their peers.

INDIA

To be able to appreciate and understand who Gandhi was and why he is considered a hero, students need to be able to put him in a context or frame of reference. This means students need to know a little bit about India's history and people. To accomplish this, students will be put into groups of three. Each person will look through the material provided and then work with the group to compile the information into something that can be presented to the class. This activity alone will help students to sharpen their research skills, develop group work skills and presentation skills and of course provide an opportunity to improve their vocabulary.

Each group will have a specific inquiry to make so that they will be considered the experts on that particular part of the information to be gathered. After the information is collected and presented, each group will be required to come up with their own test questions that I will then compile into one test. The areas of inquiry will include: (1) the caste system, (2) British occupation of India and its effects of the people of India (this might be broken up into two groups); (3) religions of India; (4) food and clothing; (5) role of men, women and children; and, (6) forms of entertainment for adults and children. The results of these inquiries will be predominantly historical to give my students an idea of India during the time Gandhi lived and worked.

Folktales

Reading folktales from India will provide my students with another perspective and enrich their contextual understanding. The folktales I have chosen are “Palwahn the Wrestler” and “The Circle Around the Throne” from *Folk Tales and Fairy Stories from India* by Sudhin N. Ghose. In “Palwahn the Wrestler”, Palwahn is a young wrestler who, in spite of being warned against it, decides to go to the “Valley of Wrath.” According to the villagers, the Valley is full of goblins and other monsters that can change their shape and trick unsuspecting travelers. They tell Palwahn that people who enter the Valley do not return. Palwahn decides to go anyway and he encounters a ghoul who of course wants to eat Palwahn. Palwahn outwits the ghoul and returns to the village with all the treasure the ghoul had ever taken from his victims.

This little story will enable my students to see several things. They will see how Indian people are not so different from them. People everywhere have fears. They will see how wit prevails over might. Most importantly they will see how the road to heroism is a journey. In the story Palwahn is boastful about his abilities so that he must prove his words with action if he is to maintain his integrity. On the way to the Valley an old woman gives him a packet of salt and an egg. With these two items Palwahn is first able to fool the ghoul. Palwahn is clearly the hero but the old woman’s small gift makes all the difference for Palwahn’s journey.

In “The Circle round the Throne,” an emissary from a neighboring kingdom brings a message to the King but the message is in the form of a sign not words. The message is simply a red circle drawn around the throne. The King has one day to figure out what the message is and respond to it. He sends his Prime Minister to search the kingdom for someone who can discern the meaning of the message. In this kingdom the most looked down upon members of society are the weavers. They are such outcasts that they are made to live just outside the city. Naturally, the only one who can discern the message is a weaver. He is not only able to respond to the message but he is able to converse with the emissary in similar signs. The end result is that the weavers save the kingdom. The weaver is the most unlikely hero. This story can show my students that heroes can come from unlikely places. The actions of the weaver cause not only the salvation of the kingdom but the King and his cohorts must re-evaluate their ideas regarding the value they place on different people.

Mohandas Gandhi

To teach my students about the life of Mohandas Gandhi I will use Christopher Martin's biography of the leader. I will start off with showing my students a picture of Gandhi as a boy and then another picture of him in his later years. I will have my students pair up to write about an experience they think Gandhi might have had. Students will share their work with the class so that we can talk about the similar and different perspectives people have. As we read, students will be able to see how shy Gandhi was as a child. They will discover that this shyness stayed with him into adulthood. He embarrassed himself on more than one occasion when he was expected to say something at a gathering but was unable to do so. He was very afraid of being laughed at and feeling the shame associated with such an experience. Yet he went on to lead a country out of colonial power in a way like no other.

My students will be able to see that, like Rosa Parks, Gandhi was made to sit in another part of a train because he was not white. Gandhi grew up in a system where people were segregated according to their caste or the social position in which they were born. Gandhi was able to see the injustice of this system and spoke out against it. In India Gandhi's family was a member of the merchant caste but when he went to England and then to South Africa he was treated like an outcast. It was in South Africa that Gandhi first began using Satyagraha, which according to Gandhi means "the force that is born of truth and love or nonviolence . . ." (Easwaran 148).

He used Satyagraha to gain rights for Indians in South Africa and later in India. In 1906, the Transvaal government wanted to pass a law where all Indians had to submit to being fingerprinted. Gandhi's idea was to fight the passage of the law by just refusing to do it. When the government later wanted to pass a law making only Christian marriages legal, his wife Kasturba Gandhi got involved and used the methods of Satyagraha to protest the law. In India the British demanded that all Indians had to purchase their salt from a specific source. They were not allowed to manufacture it themselves. Gandhi led a march to the coastal town of Dandi to collect salt from the sea, which was free for the taking. He started with a few hundred followers but eventually had thousands (Easwaran 67).

Gandhi, his wife Kasturba, and some of his sons were jailed many times using Satyagraha to gain justice for the Indians of both South Africa and India. These experiences along with many others were part of his journey, which led him to become "Mahatma" (Martin 55). As Mahatma, Gandhi was able to bring peace between Muslims and Hindus as England withdrew from India (Easwaran 96). As students take the journey through Martin's biography, they will be able to see how in spite of huge insults, mistreatments and frustrations Gandhi was able to show his incredible courage and strength through non-violence.

I want my students to see how Gandhi is not just a hero for India but for all of us in that he showed the world a different type of strength. This kind of strength is especially different from what my students are used to growing up with in our western culture. Very few students will say they believe it takes more courage to not fight than to fight. I hope they will be left with at least a greater understanding and respect for a non-violent position.

CHINA

From Gandhi I will move my students' focus to an even more easterly direction. Students will look at China from a historical perspective. Perhaps this time I will have students broken up along a timeline so that each group can give a general history of a certain time frame. To cover the event known as foot binding, students will have to have some understanding of China from the 10th century to the 19th century. I understand that the research they come up with will most likely be very superficial but it will serve the purpose of providing a context. All students will again have to be responsible for what each group comes up with. I will let each group develop their own test so that the class takes five or six small quizzes as apposed to one comprehensive test.

Folktales

The Chinese folktales that students will read will come from *Tales from China* retold by Cyril Birch. The first story is called "How Marriages are Made." In this story a young man named Wei Ku wants to find a bride and enlists the help of a friend to help him. When Wei Ku goes to meet his friend though, he realizes that he has been stood up. He does however meet what he thinks is an old man reading a book. The old man turns out to be a spirit that arranges the marriages of men. Wei Ku finds out that his bride is three years old and he will not marry her until she turns 17. He also finds out that the baby girl is very poor. Wei Ku does not want to have a poor wife so the next day he arranges to have his future bride killed. He tells his servant that the baby is actually a demon and sends him to kill the baby. When the servant sees the baby he is bringing down the knife to stab the baby but he decides that the baby cannot possibly be a demon so he just barely cuts her on the forehead.

Fourteen years pass and Wei Ku is finally getting married to the beautiful governor's daughter. She does however wear her hair so that it hides part of her forehead. When he asks her why, she reveals to him how she was cut as a baby. As it turned out the governor had adopted her. Even though this story is lacking in heroes, it does show how marriages were arranged, a belief in fate, and how murder was preferable to marriage with a girl Wei Ku felt was below his station in life. This will show students how in at least one aspect the Chinese people of the past did not have control over their lives.

The other folktale is called "The Pavilion of Peril." In this tale a young traveling student needs a place to rest for the evening. He decides to stay in the village pavilion but the people of the village tell him not to because people who stay there do not come back out. The young student is not deterred and at night he goes into the pavilion and begins to read. At two different times beings come to the pavilion and call to the master of the pavilion who tells the beings that the student is not yet sleeping. Of course the student hears all of this and finally decides to go out himself and call to the master of the pavilion. He asks who the other two creatures were and who the master is and he is told. The student returned to the pavilion and continued to read the rest of the night. At daybreak the village people come to see if he is still alive, which he is of course. With their help the student dispatches the master of the pavilion which turns out to be a scorpion and the other two

beings that turn out to be a rooster and a boar. Here the hero is the student who uses patience and knowledge over superstition to defeat evil. He is literally on a journey to find knowledge and in his quest he puts himself in mortal danger to discover the truth and relieve the village of three monsters.

Ties That Bind, Ties That Break

The Chinese hero I have selected is female and fictional. *Ties That Bind, Ties That Break* is not only a wonderful hero story; it is also an excellent coming of age story. It also has elements of acculturation. The prologue tells of the end of Ailin's story, which will be perfect for my goal of getting students to think about how heroes become heroes. Students can read the prologue and then write their own version of how they think Ailin got to be where she was. Ailin is a third daughter who in the early 1900's refuses to have her feet bound. As a daughter to a wealthy family, the only option she has for her future is marriage. The only way she can be married is if her feet are bound. Her mother and grandmother attempt twice to hold her down and bind her feet but both times she rips the binding off.

Eventually Ailin's feet remain unbound for so long that she compares her situation to bamboo shoots, which have been out of the earth too long. The bamboo shoots have become too tough to eat and Ailin has become too tough to live a typical Chinese girl's life (Namioka 111). Fortunately for her, her father understands that times in China are changing and he allows her to not bind her feet. After a time he even allows her to go to a public girls school where she learns English and about the world outside of China. Ailin's English teacher is an American who takes a liking to her. Ailin dreams of becoming an English teacher too but her father's death brings an end to her dreams. Upon her father's death, it is her uncle – not her mother – who is in charge of Ailin's future. Fortunately, Ailin's English teacher tutors her in her home over the summer. From this relationship, Ailin meets a Christian missionary who becomes her employer.

At 12 years of age her uncle tells her she must either become a concubine, nun or farmer's wife. Farmer's wives needed big feet because they had to do a lot of work. She is not allowed to continue her education, as it would be a waste of resources. Concubines, nuns and farmer's wives do not need an education. Ailin takes matters into her own hands and, when offered the job of nanny to two American children, she lies about her age and is given the job. Ailin is not totally accepted by her employers as well as her family. She works for the Warners for a year where she encounters prejudice and bigotry. Dressed in western clothing, she goes to her sister's home only to be told by the gatekeeper, "We don't have anything to do with foreigners here!" (*Ibid* 108). Ailin tries to teach the children Chinese and Confucianism but she is told that Chinese is a heathen language and Confucianism is a heathen religion (*Ibid* 100).

Eventually she is invited by the Warners to return to the United States with them. On the ship she meets a Chinese American man who is returning from a visit in China. She loses contact with the young man on arriving in San Francisco but meets up with him again on a shopping expedition to Chinatown. In San Francisco, she learns to cook Chinese food, which leads her to Chinatown for ingredients. Eventually the Warners head back to China and Ailin stays behind and marries the

young man from the ship. They both work very hard and create a successful restaurant. At the end Ailin is proud of the fact that she succeeded on her own terms and on her own “big feet” (*Ibid* 151).

How is Ailin a hero? She defies tradition, which mandates that upper class women be mutilated and crippled for the rest of their lives. She is one of the first in a changing time in China to make this break and run the risk of alienating her whole family. In spite of her risk and her precarious position, Ailin finds her own way and succeeds. Teenagers are trying to find the right road to lead them into adulthood. They see their parents and usually want to do and be something different from them and yet new roads can be scary at times. Ailin will give students an example of how taking a different road is possible. Her experience shows how someone who begins her life journey with a disadvantage can, through perseverance, reach a point of personal satisfaction.

MEXICO

Once my students leave the East, I will bring them back to the west with a look at Mexico. Students will first look at Mexico from a historical perspective beginning with the arrival of the Spaniards. Students will be divided into groups of three or four and each group will have to examine and research a different aspect of the effects of the Spaniards on Mexico. Groups will look at food, religion, dress, language and festivals. Each group will teach their information to another group, which will in turn present what they learned to the class. The group who first taught the information will then grade the second group on how thorough their presentation was. This activity will empower students by providing them with an opportunity to read books, information on the Internet, write, present or teach and finally to evaluate. By the time they are finished with this activity they should be well versed in at least two aspects of Mexican history with regards to the influence of the Spaniards.

Folktales

The folktales I have chosen for this part of the unit are “The Dragon Slayer“ and “Mistress Lucia.” “The Dragon Slayer” is about a beautiful youngest daughter who is forced to leave her home when her jealous sisters frame her for theft. Lost, alone and hungry, she encounters the Virgin Mary disguised as an old beggar woman. The girl shares what food she has with the old woman and tells her of her plight. The Virgin Mary gives the girl a magic wand, which answers any question the girl might ask and sends her off to the palace to find work.

The girl becomes the hero when she uses the wand to save the prince’s life twice. The first time she kills a dragon who plans on eating the prince and the second time she steals a magic ring from a “giant Bolombi” (Bierhurst 226) to change the king into a pig. The king had planned on killing his son so that he could have the girl for himself. The prince kills the pig and everyone lives happily ever after. This story shows the benevolence of the Virgin Mary on those who are innocent, wrongly accused and dedicated to the truth. The girl first helps the prince by trying to help the king and yet when the king plans an evil deed, her regard for him evaporates. Good conquers evil.

“Mistress Lucia” is also about a young woman but instead of being given a magical gift, she herself is magical. Lucia is very beautiful and when she combs her hair pearls fall from it, when she washes her hands, flowers come from the water and when she cries the sky opens up and it rains. Lucia catches the eye of the prince who, based on her looks alone, decides to marry her. The prince asks her brother for her hand in marriage and he agrees.

On her way to meet the prince she, like the girl in the previous story, falls victim to her maid and her maid’s mother who conspire to take her place. After being lost in the woods she is rescued partially by her magical bird and partially by a woodcutter and his family who takes her back to the palace. The women who have conspired to take her place are killed but not before her brother is killed for deceiving the prince. Lucia takes her rightful place with the prince and that is the end.

Unlike the heroine of the previous story, Lucia is a much more two dimensional character. She has her beauty, her three charms and she is trusting and kind but otherwise she is flat. Lucia’s actions are a response to what others do to her rather than acting on her environment to cause a change. This contrast presents a good example for students examine one aspect of characterization.

Like Water For Chocolate

I had a student once who was very bright, attentive, hard working and inspiring. Her biggest problem was her absenteeism. She did not skip school, but rather she had to stay home to take care of her baby sister. She had a brother who was one year older than her but he was never made to stay home to take care of the baby. *Like Water for Chocolate*, by Laura Esquivel, will speak to students who, like the aforementioned young woman, are forced to live in a stereotype. It will also appeal to students because it has romance.

Teenagers are constantly falling in and out of love. I know this because I have heard countless stories from students, male and female, about various loves in their lives. Tita is presented with an easy road to marriage by a man who loves her dearly and yet she remains true to her love. The chapters are also short and easy to follow. Even though the story takes place over many years, the chapters are noted by the months of the year.

Students will annotate as we read the story together. They will summarize each chapter with one sentence so that they can use these summaries to develop one two to three sentence summary for the whole book. I will start off summarizing the first two or three chapters for them and then guide them toward writing their own summaries by asking them to think about the whole chapter and what main event happened in each chapter. *Like Water for Chocolate* lends itself to teaching cause and effect because what Tita, the protagonist, does has such a profound effect on the other characters. This is easily discernable in each chapter. Students will also practice questioning, generalizing and making personal connections to the text. I will start off asking them questions and then as we proceed I will have the students generate questions for the whole class to ask. All of their annotations will be written down and graded.

Each chapter begins with the universal lure of food and is illustrated by a recipe. For example, when Rosaura is getting married to Tita's love Pedro, there is a recipe for "Chabela Wedding Cake" (Esquivel 24). Tita prepares all of the food that is eaten by the family and as each dish is her creation, they are directly tied to her. This direct link illustrates Tita's magical qualities. Her feelings are channeled through each dish so that whoever eats her food is affected. Those who eat what she has prepared actualize Tita's emotions. Tita is so upset about Rosaura's wedding that she cries the whole time she is preparing the cake and all of the wedding guests become ill. The wedding cake represents a tragic event, which even the wedding guests cannot stomach. This contrasts with the last chapter where Tita makes "Chiles in Walnut Sauce" for Rosaura's daughter Esperanza's wedding (28). Tita is so filled with joy and romance that all of the wedding guests have to leave right after eating to spend time with their loved ones.

Tita's story really begins when she is of marriageable age. Unfortunately, because of a family tradition, Tita is not allowed to marry but must stay home to take care of her mother until the day her momma dies. She falls in love with a young man named Pedro but when he asks her mother (Mamma Elena) for permission to marry her daughter he is told no. Mamma Elena does allow Pedro to marry Tita's younger sister Rosaura. Pedro agrees to marry Rosaura in an effort to always be close to Tita.

Eventually Rosaura and Pedro have a son but Rosaura is unable to nurse him. Tita prepares food for the baby and usually feeds him as well. Rosaura resents Tita's ministrations but has no choice but to accept them. Mamma Elena feels that it is not good for Tita and Pedro to live in the same house so she arranges for Pedro to get a job in Texas. While there, the son dies because of something he has eaten. Mamma Elena gives this news to Tita as if one of the farm animals has died and expects Tita to carry on with her task at hand as if nothing has happened. Tita cannot take it any longer. She destroys the sausages she is making and runs out to the barn where the pigeons roost. Tita will not answer when called and she will not come down. Finally the doctor is called and he takes her away to his home. There Tita is taken care of first by John's dead grandmother and then by John.

John falls in love with Tita and she falls in love with him but, for Tita, it is not the same kind of love she has for Pedro. Tita vows never to return to the ranch until attackers injure her mother. When she returns, Mamma Elena is just as mean as ever but she can no longer impose her will on Tita. Still, Tita takes care of her mother like a dutiful daughter. She sacrifices her own dreams and desires to care for her mother like she has always done in taking care of her family. Eventually Pedro and Rosaura return and have another baby. This time it is a girl and Rosaura is quick to state her plans of continuing the tradition imposed on Tita. Tita again feeds the baby from birth and makes sure that Rosaura does not go through with her scheme. Eventually Mamma Elena dies as does Rosaura. Apparently Rosaura has a fatal case of flatulence. Rosaura and Pedro's daughter eventually marries the doctor's son leaving Pedro and Tita finally alone. They are so sparked by the intensity of their emotions that they both die and at the same time set the whole ranch on fire. The only thing to survive the fire is Tita's cookbook.

Tita is a heroine in that she sacrifices her own desires for her family. She does what is expected of her and yet she does it on her own terms. Tita is also dedicated and loyal to her love for Pedro. Through her whole adult life she remains true to herself and is not led astray by a lesser road. She could easily marry John and be content but she has known the passion and strength of true love and cannot settle for less.

HOME

For the last part of this unit, students will consider all the heroes and heroines they have been presented with and they will determine exactly who their hero is. Students will be free to choose their mother, their friend and some great historical or contemporary figure. Whoever they choose they will have to follow the pattern of the unit. Students will have to first learn the history of their hero. This will be a great exercise, especially if their hero is a family member because this may provide the student with an opportunity to learn more about him or herself by learning more about their family. They will have to present their histories to the class but they will not be tested or quizzed over their histories. Histories will have to be as thorough to earn a good grade. I will probably give students a page length of four pages.

The second aspect of this part of the unit is that students will have to write an anecdotal story about their hero or heroine. This will present an opportunity for students to learn about anecdotes. The stories will not have to be long but complete in that they will have to have an event that has some sort of resolution. The third aspect is that the student will have to state who their hero or heroine is and why. They will have to state what characteristics make that person a hero. Where they selfless in their conviction to make the world a better place like Gandhi? Did they make a good role model by showing courage and determination to make a difference in their own lives and others by example like Ailin? Did they sacrifice their own dreams to maintain a dedication to truth like Tita? This will provide students with an opportunity to further their understanding of abstract ideas and incorporate them into their own lives. Students will have a better understanding of what dedication, courage, sacrifice, and fortitude mean.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson Plan One: Mohandas Gandhi

Prereading

Objective

The student will develop a reason for reading and an understanding of the material they are to read.

Materials Needed

Paper, pen/pencil, *Mohandas Gandhi* by Christopher Martin.

Activity

Before students begin reading, they will look through the book and read all of the titles and subtitles as well as the captions for the pictures. Each student will select a favorite or least favorite picture to write about. Students will write why they like or dislike the picture. We will also discuss how such a petite man could become so influential throughout the world.

During Reading

Objective

The student will infer, generalize, question and summarize.

Materials Needed

Mohandas Gandhi by Christopher Martin, paper, pen/pencil

Activity

As students read they will stop after every other page to write either an inference, question, generalization or summary. I will do this for the students for the first chapter or two at which point the students will write their own. At times the whole class might be instructed to write a question about a particular part of the biography. When this happens, students can go to the board to write their questions and then each student can write their own answer. Also, after each chapter we will work to write a one to two sentence summary.

After Reading

Objective

The student will generalize and infer using specific guidelines as well as compare and contrast different types of text.

Materials Needed

Mohandas Gandhi, paper, pen/pencil, pre-written annotations of book and previous information gathered on India.

Activity

This is a three-part activity. First, students will look at Gandhi's various activities and accomplishments and then they will determine what exactly made Gandhi a hero. They will determine whether he was focused, selfless, brave and showed determination. We will look for examples of this and write a few on the board at which time students will work on their own to find examples of these ideas. Students will also determine whether or not they think Gandhi was flawed and if so how. They will examine the idea of a flawed hero.

Second, students will list all the examples of the times Gandhi used non-violence as opposed to violence to make his point. We will look at how successful he was. Students will then write a page or two explaining how they could use Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence in their own lives.

Third, Students will look at the history gathered, the annotations from the folktales and the annotations from the biography to discern commonalities among the different text. In writing, students will consider questions like: how the folktales affected their perception of the biography, how the knowledge gained from their historical research affected their understanding of the biography and how has their understanding of people from India grown? These activities will probably take at least two weeks to complete.

Lesson Plan Two: *Ties That Bind, Ties That Break*

Prereading

Objective

The student will develop a reason for reading.

Materials needed

Book, paper, pen/pencil

Activity

The class will discuss what rituals, traditions and customs mean. Students will give examples of some rituals, traditions and customs that they know of. We will discuss how society values these events or devalues them. Students will answer the question what is right about these events and what is wrong with them. Students will then write about some ritual, tradition or custom practiced by their family that they feel was either not practiced or changed somehow. They will do this in the form of a letter to their parent(s) or guardian which students will have the option of either sending or not.

During Reading

Objective

The student will practice and improve reading comprehension through questioning.

Materials Needed

Ties That Bind, Ties That Break, paper, pen/pencil

Activity

Students will again practice annotating focusing on questioning. After every other page students will stop reading long enough to write a question about what they have read. At the end of each chapter, each student will donate one question for the class to answer in the form of an informal quiz. This will help to insure that everyone is paying attention as well as empower students to have some ownership in their own learning. The hope is that they, with consistent practice, make a habit of questioning as they read.

After Reading

Objective

The student will write an analysis of the characters of the story in terms of how they compare with members of their own family.

Materials Needed

paper, pen/pencil, *Ties That Bind*, *Ties That Break*

Activity

The class will examine each character of Ailin's family in turn and compile a list of characteristics. Once the list is complete, students will write a comparison of their own family members with that of the characters in the story. This will serve to help students see the similarities that we all have and break down some of the presuppositions and stereotypes students may have about people from China.

Lesson Plan Three: *Like Water for Chocolate*

Prereading

Objective

The student will write for a specific purpose and for a specific audience.

Materials Needed

paper, pen/pencil

Activity

The class will compile a list of events in their lives where food is an important part of that event. We will consider what types of food are prepared, who in the family prepares it, how do they feel about that person or persons after they have eaten, and how they feel after they have eaten. Students will then write their own story of an event where food was important. They will provide details of the event and all the people in their story. The story can be based on some actual family event or fictional. After everyone is finished, students will be able to share their stories with the class.

During Reading

Objective

The student will practice annotating to develop understanding of characterization.

Materials Needed

Like Water for Chocolate, paper, pen/pencil

Activity

As the class reads, we will annotate behaviors and emotions of the characters. We will do this together at first and then students will continue on their own. Students will note why a character is doing a certain activity and how they are feeling. Are they acting passively or actively? Students will look for examples of heroic qualities such as sacrifice, loyalty, dedication and courage.

After Reading

Objective

The student will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of abstract ideals through illustrations.

Materials Needed

paper, pen/pencil, poster board, markers, any other extraneous material a student might choose to use.

Activity

Class will discuss how Tita has been true to love throughout the whole story. We will then discuss other abstract ideas that people have been true to over time. One example might be Gandhi or Rosa Parks being true to the idea of equality. This will lead a discussion of what students are true to. We will compile a list of ideas that people value and how they are expressed. Tita expressed her love through her food; Gandhi expressed Satyagraha through self-reliance and self-discipline. I will ask my students to express their most valued abstract ideals by creating an advertisement for that valued idea. They will use poster board to make miniature billboards. These “expressions” will then be posted for all to see, read and enjoy.

Home

Objective

The student will do first hand research through an interview.

Materials Needed

pen/pencil, paper, possible a tape recorder

Activity

Students will consider a person in their lives whom they consider to be a hero. They will investigate the history of that person to determine how he or she came to be where they are. They will then draw conclusions based on their interviews and present their findings to the class.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bierhorst, John. *Latin American Folktales Stories From Hispanic and Indian Traditions*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2002.

This collection of folktales has many different motifs to read and enjoy.

Bierhorst, John. *The Mythology of Mexico and Central America*. New York: Oxford UP, 2002.

This collection illustrates the blending of the native Indian culture with the Spanish culture.

Birch, Cyril. *Tales from China*. New York: Oxford Press, 2000.

This book is fun to read. It is full of different stories, one of which is very long and presented in three parts. All of the stories have magic and events where good prevails over evil. Some of the characters are animals that take on human form.

Easwaran, Eknath. *Gandhi: The Man, The Story of His Transformation*. Tomales, CA: Nilgiri Press, 1997.

This book has many pictures of Gandhi from very young to very old. There are also pictures of his wife. Easwaran explains Gandhi's philosophy in great detail. There are lengthy quotes from Gandhi throughout the book.

El-Shamy, Hasan M. *Tales Arab Women Tell*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1999.

This book contains stories collected from women all over the Middle East and North Africa. Each story comes with an explanation of who contributed the story and some background information of that person. Collectively, the stories give insight into the family dynamics of the Arab culture and remind the reader of our commonalities. There is even a version of the "Cinderella" story.

Esquivel, Laura. *Like Water For Chocolate*. New York: Anchor Books, 1989.

This is a wonderful book filled with romance, recipes and magic. The heroine sacrifices her own desires to be true to both her family and her true love.

Gandhi, Mohandas. *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1957.

This book is easy to read and understand with the exception of a few Indian words where the meanings are not given. Gandhi talks about his social as well as dietary experiments and the resulting consequences.

Gandhi, Arun and Sunanda. *The Forgotten Woman: The Untold Story of Kastur Gandhi, Wife of Mahatma Gandhi*. Huntsville, AK.: Ozark Mountain Pub., 1998.

Arun and Sunanda present the reader with a different perspective of Gandhi. This book reveals some of the consequences of Gandhi's public life with regards to his family. It also

reveals an unsung heroine in Kastur Gandhi who sacrificed along with her husband while maintaining her sense of self.

Gnose, Sudhindra Nath. *Folk Tales and Fairy Stories from India*. New York: Dover Publication, 1996.

This book has stories with heroes who have to solve interesting puzzles. There are also stories that explain the ways of life. I found it to be interesting and enjoyable.

Martin, Christopher. *Mohandas Gandhi*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Co., 2001.

Written for juveniles, this book gives an account of how Mohandas became Mahatma. It is perfect for young or poor readers in later grades.

Namioka, Lensey. *Ties That Bind, Ties That Break*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1999.

This is an excellent young adult fiction story. It is a coming of age story about a young girl who defies tradition to stand true to what is right and what makes sense. She endures rejection from her family and her culture but eventually achieves prosperity and contentment.