

**Mirrors of Me: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States: Searching for Our Roots in
Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the United States**

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My America

It's morning today in America, my America,
The sun peeks tentatively around the clouds.
The bird chorus sings sweetly as my awareness of "freedom rings"!
My soul sings triumphantly with glee
As morning-by-morning new opportunities I see.
Faces, faces all around,
Black, Yellow, White, Red, and Brown
A rainbow of mirrors of me
They are all me, and I am all them.
Together we are one
The past, present and future
My fellow country people.

By
Lola McIntosh

This poem reflects my thoughts about the children I teach and me, who live in our great country, the United States of America. When I began to think about the multi-ethnic make up of my students at T. H. Rogers, and how the title of the unit relates to us, the words for expressions came in thoughts of free verse. I wrote the poem to set the tone for the development of this curriculum unit.

INTRODUCTION

My fifth grade Vanguard classroom is America! T. H. Rogers School is a unique magnet school for the gifted and talented, multiply-impaired, and deaf students. Our school also houses an elementary and middle school on one campus. We are set in the Galleria area with the famous shopping center, homes of well-to-do families, and a wealth of upscale businesses and restaurants. The population at my schools includes Pakistani, African, Indian, Hispanic, European, Greek, Russian, French Taiwanese, Thai, Korean, and other Asian, and Pacific Islander-Americans, many of whom are from first, second, and third generation Americans.

OBJECTIVES

Teachers in the Houston Independent School District are responsible for covering specific objectives known as Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), which make up the curriculum for each grade level; however, the activities and books can be altered to fit any classroom at school or at home. This unit will satisfy objectives that are required to be mastered for the core subjects of English/Language Arts and Social Studies. What a great way to assure myself that I have addressed and covered all those required objectives in a creative and fun-filled way for my students and me. The time frame for

this unit is continuous throughout the year, with each nine-week period focusing on a specific genre of multi-ethnic literature as it relates to the concept of being an American.

The following objectives from CLEAR (the curriculum for the Houston Independent School District) will be introduced, reviewed, and maintained throughout the implementation of this unit. The curriculum for the entire year focuses on a specific genre each nine weeks. The students will concentrate on comparative folk tales, but fiction and non-fiction novels, articles, documents, short stories, and essays that discuss the opinions of Americans about freedom will also be included. The Students will recognize the distinguishing features of a variety of texts to determine their genres, including biography, historical fiction, informational texts and poetry (ELA.5.12D). This objective will be introduced at the beginning of the first nine weeks. We will achieve mastery through a Library Scavenger Hunt during the fifth grade classes' first library periods.

Students will recognize that authors organize information in specific ways by examining the structure of the text (ELA.5.12B). This objective will be addressed continuously as we examine the genres during the year.

Using the structure of different texts or progression of ideas, such as cause and effect or chronology to determine the relationship between major ideas and events (ELA.5.10E) will drive the focuses of each lesson. Students will analyze text and compare each author's concepts of freedom and their expressions of this ideal.

RATONALE

It concerns me today that children sometimes take for granted the wealth of privileges they share as Americans with no sense of history. It is as if they think their lives just happen with no great effort from anyone. Imagine being a gifted ten-year-old in a fifth grade class when the teacher comes in the very first day of school and asks, "What is an American?" My purpose for writing this unit is to answer this question and to invoke empathy, sympathy, identification, understanding, and the historical background knowledge of my students' roots using many genres of literature.

The most intriguing aspects of this topic are the opportunities to research and write for my students in a language that all of us understand. Writing this curriculum will give them the opportunity to read, write, and tell "their" stories, creating accurate primary resources for others to share, study, and learn. This unit is about, and for, my students and me.

Studying Multi-Ethnic Literature will help to give students the opportunity to bridge old and new world customs, beliefs, and likes and dislikes in not only literature but also other social areas. The students will be able to embrace all their backgrounds with new knowledge and new pride. Each year, my class completes an in-depth study about the immigrants that have made Houston's population what it is today. Another advantage of studying the writings of their own people (especially children) will give them more heroes. It will allow them to study about other groups that have had similar struggles and triumphs on the great journey to become recognized and accepted for themselves, but for "the content of their character" (King), not their wealth, country, or ethnic group.

Studying and writing this unit will broaden my knowledge of the people of this great city and give me an involved understanding of the lives my students live away from the classroom. I have written units on immigration previously (and further research gained from this study and curriculum along with previous research) that will enhance my knowledge of the great people that make up our country.

During the unit study, the students will compare folk tales, myths, or legends from other cultures with those of Americans. The students will learn that each culture has a collection of these genres. Students will have the option of choosing their genre and completing a project which compares the similarities and differences in each folk tale. (This activity will show the students that all writers share a common bond and theme in their works).

The students will research the countries from which the authors come and find the underlying reasons for the writing of these books. The in-depth study will be presented in the form of a research paper. Fifth graders are required to complete research projects. The projects will be displayed in a Cultural Reading Genre History Fair, which will take place at the end of the year. Common question the students must find answers to are:

1. What are the names of authors your family reads?
2. Are these authors from your ethnic group?

Asking these questions of the students will enable the compilation of a list of authors that are unknown or unfamiliar and increase the variety of a genre in our school's library. By adding these books, the students will see who the authors from their ethnic group are, and they can be shared, loved, enjoyed, and appreciated by everyone.

During oral discussions, we will ponder how the titles and genres of the list of books we compiled are similar to and or different from the books we read in school. (Sharing this information will allow the students to place their knowledge in graphic organizers using a real-life scenario.)

The students and I will discuss our favorite titles from the other students' lists of books. Our questions will include:

1. Which ones would you like to read?
2. Do the books share the same genre?
3. Are some of the writing styles similar?

Developing this curriculum will allow the enhancement of lessons with a richer collection of resources and cover the objectives for Language Arts in a more creative manner. With this knowledge about other writers, lists of their works can be included along with those already contained on the literature list for fifth graders. The skills most affected in a positive manner will be making inferences and understanding vocabulary from context. The students will become better readers, writers, and historians.

UNIT BACKGROUND

And I'm proud to be an American, where at least I know I'm free. And I won't forget the men who died, who gave that right to me. And I gladly stand up, next to you and defend her still today. 'Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land, God bless the USA. (Greenwood)

These words crooned by Lee Greenwood in a crowd of people at a sports gathering, in the car, or the home of a relaxing American bring tears to the eyes and a swelling of pride to the heart. They are the thoughts every American has had at one time or another – a time of great patriotic participation or just random thoughts as one goes about his or her daily mundane tasks. These words touch any American whether he or she is born in this country, or has toiled by studying to become legal.

“Proud, for at least I know I'm free,” (Greenwood) seems to be the constant silver lining of every American's being. To be free is the basic right every American dotes on. Freedom, free,

what is this concept, this philosophy that drives our very existence? Freedom is “the condition of being free, the power to act or speak or think without externally imposed restraints” (*OneLook*).

We, as Americans, enjoy this forte, while others watch us from a distance and long for this right even if they are across continents. It is the incentive that motivates men, women, and children from other nations to risk their lives to attain it, to pack up whatever belongings they have to come to this country and enjoy pieces of this dream, this piece of the famous American pie.

Our great country “was founded in 1776, and allowed settlers to come to a ‘New World’ in hopes for a better life. With the start of America, came the Declaration of Independence, a document explaining all the rights of each American” (Andrews).

The Bill of Rights gives us the definitions and examples of the rights of each person living in America. The first settlements were the beginning and have continued to grow as time has passed and many peoples from many lands have pursued this wonderment of this perfect life:

The story of the American people is a story of the world’s peoples. Throughout the United States’ history, hopeful immigrants have arrived to establish new lives in a new world. Whether fleeing oppressive regimes, seeking economic opportunity or simply pursuing personal dreams, each new arrival contributed to the American mosaic. (Library of Congress, “The Making of the American People”)

“Jean de Crevecoeur, in his *Letters from an American Farmer*, defined Americans as ‘a descendent of Europeans’ who were ‘honest, sober and industrious,’ prospered in a welcoming land of opportunity which gave him choice of occupation and residence” (Attarian and Isaacs).

“He is arrived on a new continent; a modern society offers itself to his contemplation, different from what he had hitherto seen. It is not composed, as in Europe of Great Lords” (de Crevecoeur, qtd. in Friedman). These words must have bottled themselves in the minds, hearts, and throats of our forefathers. Coming to an unknown land, whether by force, war, displacement, or opportunity for a better life must have been overwhelming and frightening for the brave first generation Americans of our families.

In the article, “American Identity: Ideas, Not Ethnicity,” Michael Jay Friedman quotes Benjamin Franklin’s definition of Americans as “people who are grounded in actions and attitudes, rather than racial, religious or ethnic identity. They differ from many other peoples both in how they define themselves and in the kinds of lives they choose to lead.”

Friedman also quotes de Crevecoeur’s description of the American as:

Neither a European nor the descendant of a European; hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. He is an American...leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners.

This strange melting pot of ethnic personal varies in today’s society in America. Unlike the original English colonists, they do not just come to get freedom to live as they want; they transition to the culture of our country but internalize an existence that includes a multitude of races, creeds and colors...The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must, therefore, entertain new ideas and form new opinions.

“*E pluribus unum* is a motto found on the Great Seal of the United States...originally suggesting that out of many colonies or states emerge a single nation. It has come to suggest in contemporary times that out of many peoples, races, and ancestries has emerged a single people and nation – illustrating the concept of the melting pot” (“E pluribus unum” *Wikipedia*).

Margaret Thatcher has said, “No other nation has so successfully combined people of different races and nations within a single culture” (qtd. in Schlesinger 78).

This connection between the old new world and the new, new world must be made for the students. The plan for bridging this gap is to use genre from the CLEAR curriculum providing the students with examples of Americans who were early settlers in the young United States of America, and in contemporary America using the specific genre suggested in English/ Language Arts and be made aware of historical connections through history and geography in the Social Studies classes. These students are from families that are many cultures embedded in one contemporary American. It will benefit them to learn about their fore-Americans and the history of their people. It will give them the opportunity to see themselves in the “mirrors” of themselves. At the end of the unit, the students will have a new definition for “American,” and hopefully they will see themselves as our Vanguard Coordinator Mrs. Leslie Gonsalves sees them. Mrs. Gonsalves defines an American as:

A person who has for respect for democracy and freedom with regards for free enterprise and capitalism. An American does not lose his own cultural identity, respect, and tolerance for ethnic diversity. He believes that one can attain the American Dream and can achieve any goal he sets. An American believes that becoming and being an American has nothing to do with food, dress, language, or religion, which are based on history, culture, and social mores. An American believes in the ideals and pledges his loyalty to this great country, The United States of America.

***Red Scarf Girl*, by Ji-li Jiang**

The first book of study will be an autobiography by Ji-li Jiang. *Red Scarf Girl* is a memoir about Jiang’s experiences in Shanghai, China during the Cultural Revolution:

In the late 1950s, the leaders of Communist China were seeking to push change. China was struggling to shape its new society. As a result, the country experienced great turmoil as it struggled to find its way. The leaders set a five-year plan to push change even harder. This plan promised a “Great Leap Forward.” People worked longer hours in the factories and fields. Farm families were forced to operate small steel mills in their spare time...In spite of this, the plan was not successful. Large communes replaced collective farms, and all the farms of a village or district were combined into one big unit. Leaders of the communes told families when and where to work. Small children were cared for in nurseries, and private ownership of things like pots, pans, and tables were taken away. The people ate together in dining halls, and families had no land of their own for growing food...In 1966, the process of the Cultural Revolution in China began. The party chairman opposed the Great Leap Forward. He thought the Chinese were forgetting the Communist dream—a society in which all shared equally. His point was that there were too many experts and not enough revolutionaries. As a result, people spent so much time supporting the revolution that the production of basic needs like food and factory goods were neglected. To stop the disruption, Mao ordered millions of students and workers to move to the countryside and work on the farms. (*Focus on East Asia*)

Red Scarf Girl will provide the students with a glimpse at the conflicts, actions, and changes brought about by the Cultural Revolution in Mao’s China, and the resolution of these events within Ji-li. To set a purpose for reading, the students will be given the following questions to focus their reading:

1. How did China’s Cultural Revolution change Ji-Li’s family’s feelings and attitudes toward each other?

2. What were the four olds? Could this same concept be applied to immigrant families from any culture today? Can you think of some examples that fit today's society?

During the course of reading this book, the students will research the Cultural Revolution and learn how this historical event has made a major impact on Chinese culture and stimulate discussions with their family members who are legalized immigrants. At the same time they will learn the historical background of their ancestry, and understand why and how their family's culture is still a culture within their American life style.

Folk Tales and Fables

Folk Tales and Fables will be the second genre addressed. The focus for this unit is a tale from Pakistan. The name of the country is taken from the name Pakstai which is said to mean "Land of the Pure." The country has been referred to as Pakistan since 1971. "For many years India sought independence from Great Britain. During most of those years the Muslim League of India was also striving to establish an independent Islamic nation" (Howard). In 1940, Ali Jinnah, the Muslim leader at that time, began advocating and working for a separate Muslim state. In 1947, the British agreed to India becoming Independent, and withdrew in 1947:

The national identity of Pakistan today is that of an Islamic nation...Because the territory that is now Pakistan has a history that goes back several thousand years, and that area forms part of the present identity of Pakistan. That is one of the reasons why both residents and visitors find the relatively young nation of Pakistan historically interesting and why the national identity includes many sites and stories that are centuries older than the nation itself. (Howard)

The folktale for Pakistan is "Podna and Podni." Folktales are "a type of literature that has grown from the lives and imaginations of people" ("Pakistan: Podna and Podni"). "They sometimes tell of the adventures of animal or human characters and sometimes try to explain the physical or spiritual world. They are organized into categories: moral, beast, and wonder tales" ("Pakistan: Podna and Podni").

This is the story of two birds that live happily in the forest. Their lives change when the Raja hears Podni's beautiful singing as he passes their nest. He takes her to his palace. Podna returns to the nest to find his beloved Podni missing. The tree which is their home offers a potion hidden deep in its trunk. Podna drinks the potion which gives him magical powers and uses them to rescue Podni. While being in captivity at the Raja's palace, Podni is too sad to sing for the Raja because she misses her home and friends. Podna and his friends trick the Raja into releasing her. This folktale's moral teaches the lesson that there is a price to pay from removing a plant or animal from its natural environment. The students will discuss the story collaboratively and write folk tales of their own. When the tales are edited and published, the students will design a bulletin board for their display.

Historical Fiction

Four historical fiction books will be used. They are: *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, by Elizabeth George Speare; *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*, by Christopher Paul Curtis; *Esperanza Rising*, by Pam Muñoz Ryan; and *The Clay Marble*, by Minfong Ho.

Esperanza Rising

Pam Muñoz Ryan received the Pura Belpre Medal, an award that honors Latino authors whose work best portrays and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in a children's book, and the Jane Addams Peace Award for her book *Esperanza Rising* (Ryan website).

Born and raised in San Joaquin Valley, California Ryan is of a "smorgasbord" ethnicity. She is Spanish, Mexican, Basque and Italian. During long, hot summers, her favorite hang out was

the library. Here she became hooked on reading and books. Here she learned that her profession would be one that had something to do with books. She became a teacher and administrator, and when a friend encouraged her, she began her first book (Ryan website).

Esperanza Rising “eloquently portrays the Mexican workers’ plight in this abundant and passionate novel that gives voice to those who have historically been denied one” (Ryan website). The book is about a young girl and her mother who rise from tragedy, fleeing to California. “They confront the challenges of hard work, acceptance by their own people, and economic difficulties brought on by the Great Depression” (Ryan website). The activities accompanying this book which are found on Muñoz-Ryan’s website will involve the students in the rich histories of Mexico, and California.

The Witch of Blackbird Pond

The Witch of Blackbird Pond, by Elizabeth George Speare, is set in the 17th century. Speare was born and lived all her life in New England. She began to write when both her children were in junior high school and wrote magazine articles about family living. Soon, she began her venture in historical fiction. In 1959, Speare won the Newbery Medal for this book. The story is about a young girl (Kit Tyler) who leaves Barbados after her grandfather’s death, and sails to Connecticut unannounced to live with her mother’s sister and her family. Kit, being a free spirit had many difficulties fitting in with the Puritan family. The book is about her subtle rebellion to the lifestyle of her new family. She befriends an outcast Quaker (the witch who lives near Blackbird Pond), and is caught up in the prejudices, misunderstandings, and judgements of the people in the settlement. The students will enjoy the map studies and discovering that prejudices and misinformed judgments not only exist today, but existed in the past as well.

The Clay Marble

The Clay Marble, by Mingfong Ho shares many similarities with many other cultures that had to leave their home countries because of war. Ho was born in Rangoon, Burma. She writes about the people and places she knows well and cares about. Her childhood was spent in three different countries in Southeast Asia, and she became a writer because she wanted readers “especially children,” to appreciate the countries of her youth. As a child, she was disappointed with many of the picture books about Asian cultures. They were often written by authors who were not from Asia and seldom told the stories of ordinary people (“Meet Mingfong Ho”). According to Mingfong Ho:

Children’s books...were (usually) about princes and emperors and/or their elephants, peacocks, and tigers...This was not the Asia I knew...Hopefully, young readers in America will understand better, through some of my stories, the youth around me in Asia. (“Meet Mingfong Ho”)

Ho wanted to write honestly about real people who dealt with real-life situations... In 1980, after she saw images of Cambodian war refugees on television, she took a leave of absence from her teaching job and went to work as a nutritionist and relief worker for Catholic Relief Services on the Thai-Cambodian border. This is the experience that she wrote *The Clay Marble* in 1991.” (“Meet Mingfong Ho”)

Another reason Ho writes about life in Southeast Asia is that she:

Wants to increase understanding between cultures and provide realistic descriptions of what life is like for people in different countries. Much of her fiction features young people as the protagonists, or the main characters. Although these people live in Asia, they have qualities to which young people all over the world can relate. (“Meet Mingfong Ho”)

“*The Clay Marble* takes place in the early 1980s, in an area on the border between Cambodia and Thailand” (Meet Mingfong Ho”). During this time in history, “this [area] was the location of several crowded Cambodian refugee camps. At this time, life for the average Cambodian had long been troubled by violence and unstable political conditions” (“Meet Mingfong Ho”).

The events in the book:

Take place during the years immediately following the invasion of the Vietnamese. Cambodia was divided by warring groups. One group was made up of the surviving members of the Khmer Rouge, and another was called the Khmer People’s National Liberation Front. The groups were communist, and non-communist. These groups fought against each other as well as against the Vietnamese government.” (“Meet Mingfong Ho”).

The inspiration for this novel are as follows in Ho’s own words:

I remember my first day at the refugee camps along the Thai-Cambodian border. There are no words to describe the intensity of struggle I saw there. The sickness, the starvation, the sheer silence of this vast sea of people overwhelmed me. I wanted to shut my eyes, turn around, and go back home....Then I felt a small hand on my arm. Looking up at me was a ragged little girl. She held one palm out to offer me a small round ball of mud. I took it, then impulsively bent down and scooped up some mud from a nearby puddle, and rolled my own clay marble. When she saw that I was offering her this marble in exchange for the one she had given me, her face broke out into a beautiful wide smile....I saw these refugees then for what they really were: not the victims of war but its victors. They were the people who had, against all odds, survived, determined to start their lives over again. (Mingfong Ho 2-3)

This book, like many others, gives a face to refugees. It shows the students hardships, trials, and experiences from the points of views of people who have lived them. Reading about real life happenings will show the students that being an American is a concept, not a race of people. The book is written during more contemporary times, which will give freshness to the unit.

The Watsons Go to Birmingham

Christopher Paul Curtis with his unique style brings the experience of the Black Civil Rights Movement into contemporary realism. His way of magically weaving real events into storylike historical fiction is phenomenally awesome! Readers enjoy this humorous atmosphere during the unfolding of the story's events. Born and reared in Flint, Michigan, this talented author worked on the assembly line of the Fisher Body Plant after graduation from high school. In 1963, after graduation from the Flint branch of the University of Michigan, he wrote his first book, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* (Curtis, Back Flap). The book shows a hilarious side, told in the voice of one of the main characters (Kenny), who Curtis has managed to make distinctive and believable.

When the family travels South, and Joetta heads off to Sunday School in Birmingham, readers who know a bit of history think they know what's coming, and brace themselves for it....When Joetta is not killed in the church bombing, readers heave a sigh of relief, and the family heads back to Michigan for the last chapter of what now seems like an enjoyable but lightweight book. (Berman)

This novel will help the students through the Civil War and Civil Rights movements as they study American history. There is no way to make light of the incidents during this time in history, but this book gives a sheltered chronicle of one of the events. Students will empathize

with the characters, and perhaps connect those events with the real events that happened during the '60s Revolution in history.

At Her Majesty's Request

At Her Majesty's Request, by Walter Dean Meyers, is a story about a child captured from a West African village. She is rescued from death by a British naval officer and taken to England. There "she is christened Safah Forbes Benetta and taken to England...She is presented to Queen Victoria, who decides to provide for the upbringing of this young, orphaned princess" (Meyers, Front Flap).

Students will see another side of the slave trade in another part of the world. This will broaden their knowledge that slavery existed not only in the United States but other countries and areas as well.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson Plan 1: Map Study

Objective: To organize and interpret information in maps. (CLEAR SS.5.25C)

Introduction

The background study for the countries and states that involve the immigration and settling will begin with a study of the world map. Students will review the maps to learn the relationship in area and distance of their motherlands and where their families have lived and finally settled in America.

Materials: Wall maps of the World and United States, outline maps of the United States and the world, Student Atlases, pencils, and map pencils.

Concept Development

The duration of the time spent using the map will depend on the students' comprehension of the location of the countries and states involved.

Day 1: The world map will be introduced and discussed. Students will review the four hemispheres, the Prime Meridian, and the Equator. Other lines of longitude and latitude will be reviewed briefly. Students will begin to fill in the countries on the world map. The students will work in collaborative groups and discuss the maps as they complete the assignment.

Day 2: The United States map will be introduced and discussed. Students will fill in the states working collaboratively. They will discuss the maps as they complete the assignments.

Day 3: The class will discuss the countries of their families' origins. They will use map pencils to color in these countries. After coloring in the countries, they will color in the states.

Day 4: The students will meet in their groups to compare maps to see which countries and states they have in common. The maps will be used throughout the unit.

Lesson Plan 2: Library Scavenger Hunt

Objective: To recognize the distinguishing features of a variety of texts to determine their genres, including biography, historical fiction, informational texts, and poetry. (CLEAR ELA.5.12D)

Introduction

The first lesson will be introduced with Langston Hughes' poem, "I, Too, Sing America." After reading the poem to the class, the teacher will brainstorm with the class for definitions of America, and Americans. These definitions will be written on chart paper, and later transferred to the Word Wall in the classroom as a continuous reference.

Materials: Copy of the poem, markers, example books of literature genre, magazines, newspaper articles, a list of books available in the library (one for each student), chart paper, Parking Lot area in the classroom, post-it notes, white 8 1/2 X 11 paper, map pencils, pencils CD of Lee Greenwood's "Proud to be An American."

Concept Development

This lesson will be completed in three, forty-five minute class sessions.

Day 1: After hearing the poem, the students will draw themselves as Americans, and write a song about their picture as the Lee Greenwood CD plays in the background. They will collaborate and share as they complete the assignment. When time is called (in approximately 30 minutes), the students will share their drawings and song words with the class. If they have decided on a tune, they can sing it or read it as a free verse poem. The teacher will ask for the students to summarize the lesson and this first part is ended.

Day 2: The first lesson is reviewed, and the teacher will introduce the samples of literature genre the students will find in the library during their library class period. Students and teacher will examine and share the literature. At the end of the sharing session (20 minutes), the class will reconvene, and the expectations during the library time will be discussed. The teacher will answer any questions the students have at this time. A Parking Lot area (poster board laminated with the picture of a car, and the words "parking lot" glued on) should be made available for students to post unanswered questions on post-it notes before going to the library.

Day 3: Finally Library Day has arrived! (This day will vary according to the school's scheduled designated day for your class.) This period will be free time for selecting sources by the students. The students can choose from the list they were given at the first lesson, or they may choose items found independently. (The librarian should be contacted before the class to make arrangements for these activities)

At the end of forty-five minute period, the students will bring their selections back to the classroom. They should have a 10-minute time segment to peruse their choices.

Lesson Plan 3: A Chronicle of My American Family

Objective: To identify the economic motivations for European exploration and settlement in the United States.

Introduction

The lesson will be introduced with oral discussions sharing the reasons the students' families (forefathers and current) immigrated to the United States. If the students' parents were born as Americans, they will focus on past generations.

After sharing backgrounds, the students will brainstorm for ideas to write their own stories of their families living of the American Dream. These booklets will be titled "Mystories." The students will write about, and illustrate their families' travels from the mother country to the USA.

Concept Development

The lesson's discussions and rough draft components will be completed in one 45-minute class session.

Day 1: Completion of the booklets will continue throughout the first nine weeks grading period. Completed copies should be due two weeks before the ending of the nine weeks. The booklets should contain chronological events and comments. All illustrations should relate to the

information completed in the booklet. The students and teacher should design a rubric for assessment.

Lesson Plan 4: Americans—You and Me Festival

Objective: To culminate the unit of study with a celebration, and to share the Mystories (primary resources) with family, friends, and the T. H. Rogers' population.

Introduction

This lesson will involve the students' preparation for the festival. We will discuss the format for the festival, including display of Mystories and other literary compositions completed during our unit of study, games, foods, volunteer lists, and date and time and the general layout for that day. The planning should be completed during two 45-minute class sessions. If more time is needed, we will adjust.

Day 1: The students and I will brainstorm for ideas to make our festival interesting and fun. During the 45-minute class session, the students will meet and discuss ideas with their collaborative groups. We will set a date for the festival.

Day 2: We will sketch a general job schedule for everyone so that the festival will be well organized.

Day 3: This day will be delegated for designing flyers and invitations to announce our festival. We will complete them, send the invitations home, and place the flyers in strategic locations around the school.

CONCLUSION

This unit is designed to bring about cultural awareness, celebration, and understanding of diversity, and knowledge of the "walk in other culture's shoes." At the end of the year, the students will enjoy celebrating the knowledge of the cultures of others, but have a new respect for their own. It is my intent that they will have learned that an American believes in the ideals of and pledges his loyalty to this great country, The United States of America.

Finale

And now when I look into the mirror
I see reflections of me
We are all there...the eyes of my grandmother
The ears of my grandfather
The voice of my aunt
The twin to my sister
The strength of my brother
The mores of my cousins
And the soul of me!
My courage, my pride, my dignity
My heritage
My essence
Me!!!
Not my language,
Not my food or dress,
Not my skin color,
Not my hair,
Not my origin,
Me!
The American me!

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