

## **A Traveler's Story: A Journey Beyond The Classroom**

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O public road, I say back I am not afraid to leave you, yet I love you,  
You express me better than I can express myself.  
- Walt Whitman, "Song of the Open Road"

### **INTRODUCTION**

As a child I was always captivated when reading stories about faraway lands, mysterious creatures, magical characters, and the like. I would even go so far as to write to the authors asking them to write me more of their stories, as if I were their only audience. Simply put, reading was magic to me. Reading was an opportunity for my mind to travel even if I physically could not. As an adult, reading has maintained my interest to explore other lands and cultures; and as soon as I was able, I took many opportunities to travel to the faraway lands I often read about as a child. I still have yet to see E. M. Forster's Italy as described in *A Room with a View*, or the South African landscape in *Cry, The Beloved Country*, or walk down the streets of Charles Dickens' London, but I hope to one day. For me the connection between literature and travel is very strong. I firmly believe that one reads to broaden the mind as one travels to broaden the soul.

When I look at my classroom of inner city second graders, I do not quite see the same hunger for reading that I felt when I was a child in school. However, I realize today's kids are bombarded with so many types of media, such as television, the Internet, and video games, that books must often fight for recognition. Therefore, I would like to create a unit that focuses on building a connection to literature; more specifically travel literature and exploration. For our youth, the idea of traveling may be far from their minds, however, if I could make a connection to literature that is relevant to their own lives I believe I could plant seeds of interest in further exploration of the world around them and strengthen their interest in reading.

I have decided to title my curriculum unit "A Traveler's Story: A Journey Beyond the Classroom." This will be a six to eight-week-long unit interspersed throughout the school year. I would like to build a connection to literature for my students using experiences they understand together with the stories of the journeys of different characters in works of fiction. Primarily I would like my students to make a connection to literature, but my quest is also to have them learn to accept and appreciate the culture and diversity among people. All the characters we will study are unique in their own way, and in their journeys they will come to meet others who are different from them. In *Gulliver's Travels*, Gulliver meets the Lilliputians, people entirely different than himself, yet he learns to gain their trust and friendship. I plan to reach my goals through in-depth activities that will involve the students in reading, media, art, and various types of

materials that will expose them to the world beyond the classroom. The activities are to support their learning in an enjoyable way and hopefully to increase their interest in reading at the same time.

The majority of my classroom is made up of first or second-generation immigrants to America. Born in America, most of my students do not realize the struggles and challenges their parents faced to come to this country. Some may know a little about their heritage, but many have lost part of the heritage their parents know, having little sense of the culture and diversity in their lives and surrounding them. Even more so, they carry common misconceptions about other cultures even at this young age. From the moment I walked into the classroom, my students took one look at me and asked if I was from China. Being Asian American, I could see they were highly interested in learning more about me and where I was from, even if it was not China. I was glad they were familiar with the country, but I had to let them know that although China is the largest, there were certainly other countries in Asia. This spurred me on to teach them about other regions and parts of the world that they knew little about. How could I get them to want to read and to explore the world? For me, traveling abroad has been my most eye-opening, mind-nourishing experiences. One of my most exhilarating experiences was walking down a small trail on a misty hillside in Japan. Just the natural beauty that surrounded me left me in wonder of what else the world had to offer. If I could impart some of the knowledge I have gained into their young and eager minds, I feel it would open their minds and give them a new look at the world outside their neighborhoods. The hope is that it will possibly spur them on to have adventures of their own.

Through our journey in this unit, I would like for my students to put themselves in the shoes of the traveler, in the steps of their parents who were also travelers themselves, to get a better understanding of other cultures, as well as the challenges and adventures all travelers must face.

By integrating a curriculum that would teach the elements of reading and literature with a personal connection to their own experiences, we could broaden their horizons and move them beyond the classroom, beyond even Houston, into individuals with greater sensitivity, with a love for reading, and with a greater interest in exploring their world.

### **Historical Overview of Modern Fantasy in Children's Literature**

According to Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson, modern fantasy refers to the body of literature in which the events, the settings, or the characters are outside the realm of possibility (115). Modern fantasy differs from traditional literature in that it is written by known authors whereas traditional literature are tales that have been handed down through oral tradition (115). Imaginative literature did not appear until the eighteenth century. These stories began as political satires that later came to be enjoyed by children as well as adults (116). Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is probably the most well known of these works. In general, modern fantasy from England and various parts of the world

such as Scandinavia, Italy, and France still thrive into the twenty-first century (117). Stories such as *The Adventures of Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi from Italy, *The Story of Babar* by Jean de Brunhoff of France, and *Pippi Longstocking* by Swedish author Astrid Lindgren offer a great source of fun and diverse reading for children, while helping them to open their minds to other cultures. Modern fantasy offers many great stories for children because it requires an imaginative mind, and children with their abundance of imaginations are a great audience (117).

## **UNIT BACKGROUND**

### **The Hero and His Quest**

The literary works the students will study all revolve around travel and discovery as insight into the character's experience. Most of the literature I will show my students deals with a journey or quest where the main character or hero has a goal to reach. In these quest stories, there are several common elements that parallel the traveler's experience. First, some sort of herald calls the hero to adventure. Gandalf is a classic example from *The Hobbit*, as he is the one who initiates Bilbo Baggins on his journey. Then, the hero crosses into another world or into a place that is no longer safe and secure. In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis, the children enter into the closet and find themselves in a new land, Narnia. Along the way, the hero must survive various obstacles in his new environment. This is an element all traveler's encounter whenever they travel. Of course, the hero matures or "grows up" as he learns more about himself through his journey. To complete the hero's quest, he then returns home. In all the stories we will read, the hero, after a long and tumultuous journey, makes his or her way back home (Darigan, Tunnell, and Jacobs 206).

### ***Gulliver's Travels***

I will divide my curriculum into three sections. We will begin by reading Van Gool's children's version of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. In this travel story, Gulliver journeys to strange, imaginary lands. He meets the six-inch Lilliputians, giants, and other characters in a very entertaining tale of discovery and adventure. Through reading, writing, and visuals, the students will be learning about literary devices, vocabulary, and developing critical thinking skills. We will be comparing and contrasting Gulliver's experience, in the realm of modern fantasy, written in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to something they understand more clearly, such as the Pilgrims' journey from England to America, which also integrates Social Studies objectives of comparing and contrasting into the curriculum. We will be asking questions of how they would feel if they too, ended up on some distant shore where they did not understand the language, just as Gulliver washed up on the shores of Lilliput.

I also have the animated 1939 children's version of *Gulliver's Travels*, which I will share with the class to further give a visual to go along with the story. After reading the

story and seeing it visually, I would like the students to compare and contrast similarities and differences between the reading and the movie. For example, “What parts of the story were the same? Were there any additional characters? How did both stories end?” We could do this as a class using Venn diagrams.

I will have the students use higher order thinking skills to answer questions after reading. This will later lead them into pre-writing techniques to organize what they have learned from both stories. In a short composition, they will then answer such questions as, “What would you do if you had a giant as a friend? What kinds of things would you have him do? How would your giant look?” I would like them to start elaborating on details, and use their imagination to describe their choices. After they have finished their ‘tall tale’, they can begin building their giants out of various art materials. This would fulfill the CLEAR Curriculum objective SLAW.W.2.2.b.(1) Identify and select appropriate forms for composition as well as ELA.L.2.2.d (1-4) SLA.L.2.2.d (1-4) Using higher order thinking skills and their associated language to participate in discussions and activities.

### **The Courageous Traveler**

For the next phase of my unit, we will explore the traveler’s feelings of courage, apprehension, loneliness, and isolation to make students aware of how their own parents and foreigners may have felt when far from home. In the poem, “The Road Not Taken,” Robert Frost describes the decision to take the road less traveled and the possibilities it may bring.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveller, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

The beginning of this poem starts as the traveler, while walking through the woods, stops at a point in which the road divides and he must decide which road to take. You can sense as you read along what great difficulty the traveler is confronted with as he must make a choice. Along one road lays apprehension, danger, or possibly a greater outcome. Along the other, the trail is well worn and more predictable. At the end of the poem, the traveler says:

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

As for most travelers who embark on an unfamiliar road, they know of the dangers and follies that may arise. The courage to take this open road may lead them to a better understanding of their journey and experience than if they had chosen the path of least resistance, the safe road. At the end of Frost's poem, the traveler took the road less traveled "and [it] has made all the difference." What outcomes may happen when people decide to take the chance and go on an adventure? Literally, Frost's traveler is making a trek through a forest, and must decide between two roads. Figuratively, this is a poem that celebrates the spontaneity of life by taking the path less taken. I have discovered through many adventures of my own that the world is a much bigger and interesting place when you venture into something new. This topic will lead us into the next story we will cover in the unit, *The Hobbit*.

### **There and Not Back Just Yet**

We will continue with J.R. Tolkien's, *The Hobbit*. *The Hobbit* is a classic example of a quest story, complete with Bilbo Baggins as the hero. The story concentrates on Bilbo's development into a hero. The story begins with Bilbo Baggins, a small hobbit, living a content and comfortable life in his hobbit hole in Hobbiton. His world is changed as Gandalf the wizard calls him into an adventure with thirteen dwarves. Their quest is to reclaim a treasure from the dragon Smaug. As Bilbo proceeds through his journeys he encounters all kinds of elves, goblins, dragons, and creatures he never would have imagined if he had stayed in Hobbiton. In his journey Bilbo prevails in the face of great danger and emerges a true hero. He also proves to himself and to Gandalf that despite his unassuming looks, Bilbo possesses a great inner courage, which he was able to discover only through his journey.

I will be showing students Bass and Rankin's 1977 children's film version of *The Hobbit*. After discussing the movie, I plan on having a large bulletin board where the children can map out all the places Bilbo has visited and his journey back home. By exploring the different types of terrain that Bilbo passes through, the students will also be studying geography. Therefore, I will integrate this part of the unit with my Social Studies unit on landforms and geography. The students can bring in pictures or cutouts of various landforms that correlates with the story and add it to the map.

I will also be integrating the objective of cross-cultural similarities and differences as well as character comparison from the CLEAR curriculum with my unit. We will compare and contrast the experiences of characters in the modern fantasy stories we have covered to more reality-based fiction, such as Pat Mora's "Tomas and the Library Lady." In "Tomas and the Library Lady," Tomas is a migrant farm worker whose family must move constantly for work. The family works hard and in his free time, Tomas visits the library and learns to love reading with the help of the 'library lady'. He begins to take a journey in his mind through reading. After reading from the text, we will be asking questions, "How do you think Tomas feels as he moves from school to school? What challenges does Tomas face? How did you feel when you had to move or say goodbye to

a friend?” I would also like them to write a letter to their parents, asking their parents how it was like to move to a new country or a new town for the first time, and what challenges they had to overcome. They will actually address their letters to their home address and I will mail them to their homes. My hope is that the parents will discuss the letter with their children, sharing stories and personal experiences. I think this will give the parents an idea of what the students are learning in class, as well as giving the students a new perspective on their parent’s lives, a new respect to their parents, and to their heritage.

It is my hope that through in-depth study of these different characters in fiction, the students will learn to empathize with others, and to understand the personal struggles and challenges individuals overcome on their journey to greater things.

## **THE NEED FOR MULTICULTURALISM**

“As Louis Rosenblatt says, books are a means of getting outside the limited cultural groups into which the individual is born” (Sell 330). I feel it is never too early to give your child a multicultural awareness. After all, we do live in a multicultural society in a multicultural world. By moving outside your circle and venturing into different cultures and ways of life, we can help change the children’s attitudes towards diversity into one that is more open and accepting. Furthermore, “teaching children at an early age about the [positive] differences and similarities between people will not singularly ensure a more gentle and tolerant society; but might act as prerequisite to one” (quoted by Darigan, Tunnel, and Jacobs 293).

### **Passport to the World: Getting Ready!**

In the last phase of their journey, I will be combining what the students have learned in terms of the trials and travails of the traveler and actually have them learn about the various laws and customs of other cultures they are not familiar with, just as Gulliver did in *Gulliver’s Travels*. Through reading various multicultural stories, film, illustrations, and artifacts, we will be learning the different aspects of each culture. I will introduce this portion of multiculturalism from my curriculum unit to my class by reading *How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World* by Marjorie Priceman. In this entertaining and informative story, a young girl explains how to make an apple pie. However, she explains that if the store happens to be closed, you could travel around the world to collect your ingredients. She travels to Sri Lanka, France, England, and Jamaica all to get the ingredients she needs for her apple pie. “You can’t miss it. Sri Lanka is a pear-shaped island in the Indian Ocean. The best cinnamon in the world is made there, from the bark of the native kurundu tree. So go directly to the rain forest. Find a kurundu tree and peel off some bark. If a leopard is napping beneath the tree, be very quiet” (Priceman 12). This is a wonderfully informative and entertaining story about the unique ingredients and aspects from different countries. It has brightly illustrated pictures and descriptions of the countries she travels, which will give the students an idea of how other

countries look and what distinctive things they have to offer. In this book, the main character of the little girl searches for all the best ingredients that can be found around the world. She explains how French chickens lay elegant eggs, so you should travel to France to get the eggs you need for your pie. She tells how Italy has “superb semolina wheat,” an important ingredient you will also need and proceeds to travel to an Italian farm to gather her wheat. This would be a great book to start off my unit on multiculturalism. It shows how rich and diverse other countries are in what they have to offer. This idea that you may have to travel to find everyday ingredients moves them to understand that there are many things in their every day life that are native and special to other countries outside of their own. For an activity, we could take things we have in our pantries or kitchens and research where in the world you could go to get similar ingredients. This would require students to do some research through the computer and at the library. This will also fulfill the CLEAR objective of analyzing and evaluating information about a topic using a variety of oral and visual sources (SS.2.17.a (1, 6)).

After this introduction, I would like my students to focus on three nations of the world: Japan, South Africa, and France. I plan to divide the class into different “tribes” where each group is responsible for gathering information about a particular culture around the world. Along with their study of unique customs and traditions, they will learn some of the language of these different nations and share them with the class. Throughout this unit, the students will be keeping a journal of their learning, as well as any questions or thoughts that could be discussed in class. I expect the students to share the information they have collected and the importance of learning about other cultures. Students will read various stories from countries around the world, such as folktales from Japan and Africa, traditional French fairy tales, and more modern day stories from France like *The Little Prince*.

### **Around the World**

“Xenophobia, the mistrust or fear of people who are strangers or foreigners, is at the root of our worldwide inability to live together in peace. Literature can be one of the most powerful tools for combating the ignorance that breeds xenophobic behavior” (Darigan, Tunnell, and Jacobs 293). I will be introducing my class to the various literature and cultural traditions of other countries. My main purpose for presenting multicultural works to my students is to foster an awareness, understanding, and appreciation of people who might seem different from the reader. Research shows that the use of multicultural literature can augment reading comprehension and problem –solving skills in children. Secondly, I would like to introduce readers to the literary traditions of different world cultures and to gain an appreciation of the rich literature that can be found around the world (Darigan, Tunnell, and Jacobs 292).

## **Hajememashite (Nice to meet you!): Japan**

Japan is an archipelago lying off the east coast of the Asian continent. It is made up of four major islands, with a size slightly larger than Italy, or the US state of Montana. Interestingly enough, it is also the site of Gulliver's fourth journey. The four islands are Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Today, approximately 126 million people live in Japan. The majority of the population lives in the major cities of Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya. This high concentration in major urban areas is primarily due to the result of industrialization (Wakayama 2). Japan has embraced Western technology and has risen to become the second most powerful economic nation in the world. Japan also has a rich and complex topography in combination to its varied seasons, which has contributed to its visual richness and beauty.

For this section of the curriculum, we will be exploring a modern Japanese story, *Crow Boy* by Yashima Taro. We will also be reading "Benizara and Kakezara" and "Little Snot Nose Boy," variations of popular traditional folktales from Japan in Margaret MacDonald's *Celebrate the World*. These stories will give insight into Japanese customs, food, culture, and daily life. In *Crow Boy*, a shy mountain boy leaves his home to go to school in the nearby village. The nicely illustrated pictures also expose the children to a different type of life style in Japan, where many children must walk long ways to go to school. This tale speaks of learning and acceptance of others who are different, a universal concept in teaching, and would be a wonderful story to introduce to the classroom. "Benizara and Kakezara," a variant of the Cinderella story, is a Japanese folktale which introduces the students to common traditions in the Japanese culture such as haiku, traditional costumes, and traditional celebrations, such as Hina Matsuri. Hina Matsuri is known as Girl's Day Celebration in Japan. It is celebrated on the third day of the third month and is a celebration for young girls where they set up an elaborate display of dolls in their homes and invite their friends to their homes for tea and special treats (MacDonald 22).

Another folktale we will read is called "Little Snot Nose Boy." This is a tale that teaches about how kindness can reward you, as well as the outcomes brought about because of greed. There is also a Boy's Day celebration on May 5 called Tango No Sekku, which is similar to the girl's celebration, except that the boys put up wind socks made in the shape of carp in front of their homes (MacDonald 111). The festival symbolizes the hopes of the parents for the boys to grow up strong and healthy. I plan for the class to combine both celebrations (Girl's Day and Boy's Day) by having the girls practice the customs for Hina Matsuri and having the boys create flying carps for Tango No Sekku. I know how much my class likes to show and tell, so the girls could bring in meaningful dolls or stuffed animals to display for Hina Matsuri. I would also give my students the option of doing both projects, regardless of whether they are a boy or girl, but having them bear in mind that traditionally, girls and boys have their own separate holidays.

## **Tabemashou: Let's Eat and Watch!**

I would also like the students to have a taste of Japan by having them try different Japanese snacks or treats. They will learn about common types of Japanese food, such as rice crackers, sushi, and tea. After exploring the common Japanese diet, we can compare the similarities and differences between what my students normally eat and what students in Japan eat. As one activity, I would like for them to write their own recipes for sushi. I will teach the traditional ingredients that go into making sushi, such as tuna, cucumber, and pickled plums. We can make real sushi as a class and I will let the students taste the sushi. Then, they can decide what they would like to put in their own sushi roll and write this down. I will collect the recipes and we can make it into a class recipe book. Later we will add other recipes from the countries and regions we have explored.

In addition, I will be showing my students Hayao Miyazaki's animated story, *Sen to Chihiro No Kamakakushi (Spirited Away)*. This film not only gives a rich visual of how modern day Japan looks, it also aligns itself with the theme of travel and exploration. In this story, the main character, Chihiro, finds herself and her parents traveling to a new town to live. She begins the story as a very bored, self-absorbed child. Along the way, the family stops to rest and Chihiro, walking around the wooded rest stop starts to explore the landscape around her. Somehow she walks through a tunnel passage and wanders into a sort of alternative universe where her parents have been turned into pigs and where gods, spirits and goblins inhabit the towns and villages. Since her parents have been transformed into pigs, it is her mission to find a way to rescue her parents and find her way back to her world. By the end of the journey she has learned the meaning of friendship and devotion, as well as new discoveries about her inner strength and courage. This story has all the elements of the hero genre in books, which include the elements of self-discovery and change, something most travelers hope to gain by the end of their journey.

## **AFRICA: THE CONTINENT**

This is my story which I have related, if it be sweet or if it be not sweet, take some elsewhere and let some come back to me.

-Ashanti narrator

The continent of Africa is a vast land of such rich diversity and culture that it would be difficult to cover all the many tribes that live in Africa, with their individual tongues and customs. Although Africa is so varied, traditional village life, warm family ties, and hospitality are common among all Africans. Another commonality is the rich tradition of storytelling that is a thread that connects its entire people (Onyefulu). One book I will share with my students is called *A is for Africa* by Ifeoma Onyefulu. This book does not concentrate on any one specific region in Africa, but shares the many similar customs and meanings throughout its different tribes. This book gives many beautiful actual photos taken from different villages in Africa, using each letter of the alphabet to describe

something unique about Africa. For example, “E is for the Embrace we give our loved ones. Africans are very warm people, and this is how they welcome relatives and friends...K is for Kola nuts offered to guests to show warmth and friendship” (Onyefulu). This book gives wonderful examples of foods, clothing, and the everyday life of its people that my class can use for discussion.

### **The Rainbow Nation: South Africa**

South Africa is located at the southernmost tip of the continent of Africa. It has a varied landscape that includes mountains, deserts, savannas, and beaches (Stotko 6). The land known as South Africa was originally inhabited by San hunter-gatherers. Today, South Africa is known as the “Rainbow Nation,” rich with a multicultural and multi-ethnic society.

Indigenous Africans comprise about 79% of the population and are divided into a number of different ethnic groups. Whites comprise about 10% of the population. They are primarily descendants of Dutch, French, English, and German settlers who began arriving at the Cape of Good Hope in the late 17th century. Coloreds are mixed-race people primarily descending from the earliest settlers and the indigenous peoples. They comprise about 9% of the total population. Asians descend from Indian workers brought to South Africa in the mid-19th century to work on the sugar estates in Natal. They constitute about 2.5% of the population and are concentrated in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. (*Background Note: South Africa*).

In Africa, the roots of oral storytelling run very deep in the people as it is passed on from generation to generation. Many stories have undergone changes as they passed on over the centuries. However, it is a common characteristic of African folktales that a story may grow wings as it is retold, but may one day return to you, enriched with new details and often a new voice (Gordon 7). As we study this region of the world, I will introduce the students to traditional tales that were used to explain the “why” and “how” of life. We will be reading “How the Guinea Fowl Got Her Spots” in *Open Court Reading*, and “The Mantis and the Moon” by Marguerite Poland, both of which are stories that explain phenomena in nature while also teaching morals. “How the Guinea Fowl Got Her Spots” explains how the Guinea fowl first had just a plain coat of feathers, but through the help of her friend, was able to outsmart the lion that wanted to eat her on several occasions. At the end of the story she was able to fool the lion into believing she was a different bird by putting spots all over herself. Both these stories have beautiful illustrations showing the African landscape, native colors, and patterns with which the children can familiarize themselves. After reading folktales from Japan and Africa, the students will be able to compare similarities and differences between the two cultures in terms of its stories and customs. This would fulfill the CLEAR objective ELA.R.2.7.a. (4), identifying and describing cross-cultural similarities and differences.

After exploring the literary aspects of both stories, we will delve into other aspects of South African culture, such as music, handicrafts, and dance. I would like the students to listen to music and learn about the beautiful beadwork the region is known for. The students will be able to make their own African beadwork. Another project is to make African folding fans. Large ceremonial fans were used to keep kings cool when they held court and received their subjects (Adams 12).

## **COMMENT ALLEZ-VOUS?: FRANCE**

Although the country of France is about the size of the state of Texas, it is a country rich in diversity among its people and its regions. Neither historian nor citizens can agree when the date of France's birth of a nation took place. Some believe it was in 496 AD when King Clovis converted to Christianity, or 987, with the coronation of Hugh Capet, whose kingdom ruled for 900 years. Some argue it was in 1789, the year of the French Revolution in which France declared itself a republic (*France: History: From Ancient Times to the Fifth Republic*).

Despite France's slow emergence into the nation we know of today, it is a country whose diversity stretches back into its beginnings in history. The Celts, the Greeks and Romans, warrior nomads such as the Huns, Germanic and Nordic people, Arabs and Vikings, all inhabited regions of France at some time and thus added to its emergence into the country we know of as France today. These people determined the core population in certain areas, and they mixed and married to create the melting pot in which France was cast (ibid.). Today France is very much a multi-ethnic nation, home to many inhabitants of many countries. It is divided into 26 regions, with each region carrying its own distinct foods, customs, and history. Its landscape, with terrain that includes many fertile plains and forests, is as rich and diverse as its people.

## **Fairy Stories**

In terms of children's literature, it was not until Charles Perrault wrote down the fairy tales he had heard, that anyone began reading fairy tales. Before Perrault, stories had been passed on from generation to generation orally, just as it was in the Japanese and African cultures. Some believe that Perrault first heard these stories when they were told to his children by their nurse. Some stories such as *Sleeping Beauty* are believed to have their roots in mythology (Stone). For this phase of my unit, the class will read Perrault's classic fairy tale, *Cinderella*. Because we are studying multiculturalism and diversity, I thought we would also read another version of this classic tale, called *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China* retold by Ai-ling Louie. This version is the oldest known version of Cinderella dating back to the middle of the ninth century in China, almost a thousand years earlier than the earliest known European version ("Cinderella Around the World"). I would like the students to compare both stories and explain what they liked about each story.

A wonderful tale that deals with the theme of enlightenment through travel and exploration is Antoine de Saint Exupéry's *The Little Prince*. This is the story of a pilot who finds himself stranded in the desert only to meet a little boy with a big imagination. Both are lonely and stranded, but they are both explorers who travel the world. The little boy tells the pilot of his many adventures. Through his friendship and exploration of their feelings, they come to know more of themselves and their world.

After reading various French tales, I want the students to have the experience of a little French culture. We will visit some of the different regions of France through pictures and materials, learning about what foods and products each region is known for. I will ask each of my groups to search for information on a product from the various books and media available to them. The students will have to be detectives finding as much information as they can on Camembert, for example. After they find out that the Normandy region in France exclusively produces Camembert, I will give the students a small taste of French cheese and crackers. In this way the students will have to really work for their special treat. I would also like for my "tribes" to find different French recipes to add to our recipe book.

## **TEACHING STRATEGIES**

I want to integrate the study of Japan, Africa, and France as part of my Social Studies curriculum, and of course it will meet several English objectives. It would be in line with the Clear Curriculum unit of multiculturalism and diversity as well as a study in people, geography, land, and agriculture. I will be using much of the artifacts and things that I have collected from my travels to Japan and France along with other visuals, and of course the literature to acquaint the students with these different cultures. I hope to give the students a real "taste" of these unique cultures by letting them recreate what children in those countries might actually eat, wear, and celebrate. I also want them to have something tangible that they can look at to see how far they have traveled from the beginning of their journey up to the present. As I mentioned earlier, I will separate the students into three different "tribes" which are responsible for one of the areas we have studied so far. Each group will create a collage of what they have learned and will work as a team to make it as complete as possible. I want to make sure the focus will also be on working together to create a product that everyone can appreciate and enjoy.

The *finale* to my phase on multiculturalism and literature will culminate all their learning into a fun activity presented in a game show format. They will use the knowledge they have gained through all three cultures studied, and test their retention of this knowledge in a fun and competitive format. I will model the game after the show, "Jeopardy." My students really seem to enjoy games that are competitive and interesting, and this would be a perfect opportunity for them to see how much they have learned.

Through this journey of literature and exploration, the students will be able to recognize and appreciate the diversity in their own communities and the global village

around them. I believe this curriculum unit will be a fun way to develop a greater interest in reading, as well as to open their minds to the joys of exploring new ideas and avenues of study. In order to truly understand a person's struggles and challenges, you need to walk in their shoes. In Walt Whitman's, "Song of the Open Road," his beliefs and intent are made clear as he says,

Afoot and light-hearted, I take to the open road,  
Healthy, free, the world before me,  
The long brown path before me, leading wherever I choose.  
Henceforth I ask not good-fortune-I myself am good fortune;  
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,  
Strong and content, I travel the open road.

First and foremost, I want to initiate a life-long love of reading with my curriculum unit. From this beginning, I want students to wear the shoes of the traveler, walking on an "open road" toward greater discoveries and experiences.

## **LESSON PLANS**

### **Lesson Plan One: Spirited Away on a Class Field Trip**

This lesson plan is intended to go along with the annual field trip the students take together. My hope is for students to be aware of their experience as a "traveler" during the field trip and to record their experience in a small journal they will take with them. I want them to create their own record of this experience in a classroom book.

#### ***Objectives***

The student will:

- Record parts of their journey in a journal (what they liked or didn't like, things they saw and did, drawings, etc.)
- Create a short essay and pictorial of their recent travel experience expressing what they have learned and seen on their trip.
- Discuss the difficulties of their trip or "journey" as well as the positive aspects of their experience.
- Learn the components of the writing procedure (creating a first, second, and final draft)
- Collaborate to make a class book of their first group travel experience to be published in a hardcover bound book.

#### ***Procedure***

After reading *Gulliver's Travels* and viewing *The Hobbit*, the students will have a good idea of the experiences of the traveler. Utilizing their previous practice with the writing process, students will write a short one-page summary essay of their experience on the field trip.

- A. The students will go on their annual classroom field trip, usually in the second part of the year. During their trip, they are to take a small journal with them to record the things they see, hear, like or didn't like. Students should keep in mind questions such as:
1. *How did you feel when you finally got there?*
  2. *What things did you see that you may not have seen before?*
  3. *What did you like about the trip?*
  4. *What didn't you like about the trip?*
  5. *Did anything unusual happen?*
- B. Students will then write a short half-page essay on what they saw on their trip, what they enjoyed, and what they learned on their trip.
- C. The students will do at least two drafts, with editing, and revising. In addition, the students will illustrate their trip with a hand drawn picture.
- D. I will then collect the finished essays and completed illustrations and send them to a children's book publisher to be bound and published. Website is: [www.studenttreasures.com](http://www.studenttreasures.com).
- E. After the book has been printed, the class will be able to share it and enjoy reading the writings of fellow classmates.

### ***Assessment***

Students will be graded according to how well written their essays are, whether they went through the steps of revising and editing. I am looking for complete thoughts and ideas, grammatical errors, and whether they answered all questions.

## **Lesson Plan 2: Make an Apple Pie and See the World**

Length of Lesson: 90 minutes

### ***Objectives***

Students will:

- Identify necessary ingredients in a recipe
- Learn the vocabulary of different parts of the world
- Use math concepts of addition and subtraction with money concepts they have learned

### ***Materials***

Chart paper  
Paper  
Pencil

### ***Teacher Preparation***

- A. Teacher will prepare a giant chart with the necessary ingredients to make a basic apple pie.

- B. Teacher will prepare separate charts for all of the necessary ingredients. The ingredients will be in different languages with English translations. One chart will be a chart for eggs labeled in Japanese, French, Spanish, and Italian with prices. One chart will be for flour in all four different languages with prices. Another chart will be for sugar in all four different languages with prices, and so forth.
- C. Teacher will prepare a blank shopping list with spaces for prices, where students can add up the total price of their ingredients.

### ***Procedures***

The goal is for the group to learn some vocabulary words from different countries, and to use their math skills to add up the amount of money they have spent on their pie.

- A. Students will be divided into four “tribes.” Each tribe will be responsible for finding ingredients to make an apple pie from a certain country. One tribe will be assigned to Japan; therefore they will need to find the apple pie ingredients written in Japanese. A second group will be assigned to Spain, and will need to find the apple pie ingredients written in Spanish, and so on.
- B. I will provide students with several charts. Each chart will contain one ingredient from their recipe, but from different places in the world written in those languages, but also translated in English. The children need to choose their ingredient from the region of the world they have been assigned to. The price for each of the ingredients will be different.
- C. Students will write down the correct name of their ingredient in their given country’s own language, as well as the English name, and the price.
- D. Students will present their ingredients orally and review the vocabulary words from their particular country. They will also tell me how much they spent on their apple pie.

### ***Assessment***

Students will be graded according to how well the group worked together, whether they chose the correct ingredients in the correct language, and if they added correctly to get the total they spent on their apple pie.

### **Lesson Plan 3: Let’s Eat! Class Recipe Book from Around the World**

Tentative Length of Lesson: 120 minutes

### ***Objective***

Students will:

- Find a common dish from a specific region of the world
- Use research strategies to find information from a certain country
- Provide a recipe and a short summary of the area it comes from

### ***Materials***

Several books on Japan, France, South Africa, or Africa

Websites

Magazines

Photos

Construction paper

Pens, markers

### ***Teacher Preparation***

- A. Teacher will model how to find recipes from a specific region by introducing the class to various sources of information such as books, magazines, and websites.
- B. Provide books of food and recipes from different parts of the world.

### ***Websites***

These are a few websites I have found that will be useful for student research:

- <<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/index.html>>
- <<http://www.phillipsbrooks.org/students/4th/Japan%20Folder/Japan.html>>
- <<http://www2.lhric.org/pocantico/france/france.htm>>
- <<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/fr.html>>
- <<http://www.info-france-usa.org/kids/>>
- <<http://pbskids.org/africa/myworld/ngaka.html>>

### ***Procedure***

- A. Students will look through books, magazines, and photos and choose their recipe.
- B. Students will write their recipes down on construction paper.
- C. Students will then look up information about the country of the recipe's origin and answer questions such as:
  1. *What country is this recipe from?*
  2. *What language do they speak?*
  3. *Name the capital city of this country.*
  4. *What is the population?*
  5. *What currency do they use?*
  6. *What are some special holidays or festivals in this country?*
- D. Students organize their answers into a short summary paragraph to go along with their recipe. They will add it to the bottom of their recipe page.
- E. The students may then decorate their paper with photos or drawings that relate to their recipe or the region it is from.

### ***Assessment***

The students will be graded on:

- Organization and neatness of work.
- Completion of questions asked.
- How well written is the summary paragraph. For example, grammatical errors, complete sentences, complete thoughts.

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Works Cited

- Adams, Cynthia G. *International Crafts and Games*. MI: Instructional Fair, 1997.  
This book contains diverse projects inspired by customs and artifacts from cultures around the world. There are many art projects as well as background information on several countries around the world.
- Darigan, Daniel L., Michael O. Tunnell, and James S. Jacobs. *Children's Literature: Engaging Teachers and Children in Good Books*. NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall, 2002.  
This book had good information on modern fantasy, more specifically information about the hero's quest. It also describes the common elements of a classic quest story.
- Gool, Van. *Gulliver's Travels in Lilliput*. New York: Twin Books Corp., 1991.  
This is the children's version of the literary classic which I thought would be more appropriate with the age group I work with. This condensed version with vivid illustrations is appropriate for my grade level.
- Gordon, Marguerite, ed. *Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Ltd., 2002.  
This is a collection of traditional folktales from different parts of Africa. The tales have varied themes and characters, and the illustrations are bright and vivid.
- "How the Guinea Fowl Got Her Spots." In *Open Court Reading*. Ed. Dr. Carl Bereiter, et al. Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill, 2000.  
A traditional African folktale about a clever Guinea fowl who was able to trick her enemy, the lion, from eating her. This story has nice illustrations of the African countryside to accompany the story.
- Louie, Ai-Ling. *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China*. New York: Puffin, 1996.  
A Chinese version of the classic Cinderella story. This version is the oldest known Cinderella story dating almost a thousand years earlier than the European version.
- Lynch-Brown, Carol, and Carl M. Tomlinson. *Essentials of Children's Literature* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002.  
I used this book as a source for background information on the history of modern fantasy and related children's books. This book had useful information about the quest stories and the role of the hero in these stories.

MacDonald, Margaret Read. *Celebrate the World*. USA: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1994.

A great book with a compilation of folktales from all over the world. “Benizara and Kakezara” and “Little Snot Nose Boy” are two folktales I will be sharing with students. It also has extra information on celebrations of different cultures.

Mora, Pat. “Tomas and the Library Lady.” In *Open Court Reading*. Ed. Dr. Carl Bereiter, et al. Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill.2000. 66-85.

This is the story of a boy who comes from a family of migrant farm workers who must travel from place to place. Through the discovery of the joys of reading the boy is able to go on an adventure in his mind.

Onyefulu, Ifeoma. *A is for Africa*. New York: Silver Burdett Ginn, 1993.

A beautifully photographed children’s book that uses each letter of the alphabet to describe Africa’s customs, food, and culture. The photos allow students to see the real Africa, inside its small villages, and every day lives of its people.

Poland, Marguerite. “The Mantis and the Moon.” In *Nelson Mandela’s Favorite African Folktales*. Ed. Marguerite Gordon. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Ltd., 2002. 62-65.

This is a collection of traditional folktales from different parts of Africa. The tales have varied themes and characters, and the illustrations are bright and vivid.

Priceman, Marjorie. *How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World*. New York: MacMillan/McGraw-Hill, 1994.

This is a delightful story that begins with a recipe for making apple pie. The main character explains that if the store happens to be closed that day, then you could go to several other parts of the world to collect the ingredients.

Ronnqvist, Lilian. “Secondary-level EFL: Melina Marchetta’s *Looking for Alibrandi*.” In *Children’s Literature as Communication*. Ed. Roger D. Sell. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2002. 330.

There is good information on the need for multiculturalism in the classroom. I used this as background information on language and culture.

Rosenblatt, L. *Literature as Exploration* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Heinmann, 1970.

An in-depth look at the importance of literature in education and as a tool for exploration of ideas. It discusses various themes in literature with references to children’s literature.

Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de. *The Little Prince*. New York: Harcourt, 2000.

This is a version translated by Richard Howard. It tells the story of a pilot who finds himself stranded in the desert and his encounter with a young boy. This is a

children's classic but it is also gives deep insight into the meaning of life and the value of love and friendship.

Sell, Roger D., ed. *Children's Literature as Communication*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2002.

I used this as a source for information on multiculturalism and language. This book contains several collections of essays written on themes prevalent in children's literature, as well as several other topics.

Stone, David. *Famous French Fairy Tales: Collected and Adapted from the Original Perrault*. New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1959.

A collection of Perrault's classic fairy tales. Examples include *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Blue Beard*, and *Cinderella*.

Stotko, Mary-Ann. *South Africa*. Milwaukee: Gareth Stevens Publishing, 2002.

This book gives an overview of South Africa, its history, geography, arts, literature, and much more. This book would be appropriate for elementary school readers.

Taro, Yashima. *Crow Boy*. New York: Viking Press, 1955.

This is a beautiful tale set in Japan about a shy, quiet boy from a small village. The theme of the story is of loneliness, learning and acceptance, feelings which students of all cultures are able to relate to.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997.

This is a classic story about the travels and trials of one small hobbit who ventures into a strange and different world. A great travel and adventure story to use in my unit.

Wakayama, Hitoshi. *Japan: Profile of a Nation*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1995.

This book had information regarding the land, geography, culture, and traditions of the Japanese culture. It contained in-depth information on several aspects of the people and the country.

### **Internet Sources**

*Background Note: South Africa*. 2003. U.S. Department of State.

<<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2898.htm>>.

This site contains basic information about Africa's people, geography, government, and economy.

*Cinderella Around the World*. Cleveland Opera. <<http://www.clevelandopera.org/tour/educational/cindtour/world.html>>.

An informative website of the many different retellings of Cinderella from around the world. This site describes the Chinese, African, Native American, German, France, and English versions of Cinderella.

*Favorite Poems by Robert Frost.* <[www.geocities.com/Heartland/Bluffs/2441/rfrost.html](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Bluffs/2441/rfrost.html)>.

This website contains several poems by Robert Frost. The poem “The Road Not Taken” is a beautiful poem expressing the difficult choices a traveler must make between the easy path and the path less traveled.

*France: History: From Ancient Times to the Fifth Republic.* Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. <[www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/france/gb/histoire/histoire01.html](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/france/gb/histoire/histoire01.html)>.  
This website gives useful information about France’s history, explaining its early beginnings as a country into its slow emergence into modern day France.

*Studenttreasures.com: Motivating Students to Learn through Publishing.* 2004.  
<[www.studenttreasures.com](http://www.studenttreasures.com)>.

This is a wonderful teacher’s resource that explains how a classroom can have their own books published at no cost to the teacher or students.

Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass.* Philadelphia: David McCay, 1900; Bartleby.com, 1999. <<http://www.bartleby.com/142/82.html>>.

This website contains several of Walt Whitman’s most famous poems. Walt Whitman has several poems on the theme of travel that were appropriate for my unit.

## **Filmography**

*Gulliver’s Travels.* Fleisher, Dave (Director). Videocassette. Alpha Video, 1939. 72 min.

I will be using this film after introducing students to the children’s book version. It gives students a rich visual to go along with the story.

*The Hobbit.* Bass, Jules and Arthur Rankin Jr. (Directors). Videocassette. Warner Home Video, 1977. 77 min.

This is an animated version of Tolkien’s original story. Although this is an older version, it will be a good visual for students to learn about the traveler’s experience.

*Sen to Chihiro No Kamakakushi (Spirited Away).* Videocassette. Miyazaki, Hayao (Director). Walt Disney Home Video, 2002. 125 min.

This is a wonderful animation of Hayao Miyazaki’s beautiful story of a young girl’s journey into finding herself as she works to rescue her parents. The elements of the classic quest story are all present in this animated movie from Japan.

## Supplemental Resources

Banks, James A. *An Introduction to Multicultural Education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999.

This book gives several sources to find stories written in other countries. It also speaks of the importance of a multicultural education in the classroom.

Beckett, Sandra L, ed. *Reflections of Change: Children's Literature since 1945*. Greenwood Press, 1997.

This book discusses various pieces of children's literature in the modern age. It also discusses the various genres of children's literature from fantasy to science fiction.

Carpenter, Humphrey, and Mari Prichard, eds. *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*. Oxford UP, 1999.

This is a good source to use for further information on selected stories in children's literature, from classics to the present.

Gatti, Anne. *Tales from the African Plains*. New York: Dutton Pavilion Books, 1994.

This book contains a collection of folktales popular in Africa. Beautiful illustrations go along with the stories.

Hayden, Carla D. *Venture into Cultures*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1992.

This is a resource book of materials and programs for teaching multicultural units in the classroom. It also has background information on several countries around the world.

McAlpine, Helen and William. *Tales from Japan*. Oxford UP, 2002.

This is a good resource of classic Japanese folktales. Each tale has a moral or lesson to be learned.

*The Norton Book of Travel*. Ed. Paul Fussell. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987.

This book contains numerous pieces of travel literature that I used to get an idea of characters and time periods where travel and writing have been used.

Tames, Richard. *A Traveller's History of Japan*. New York: Interlink Publishing Group, Inc., 1993.

This book gives an introduction to the language, literature, and arts in Japan. It also goes into the history of Japan and how it has grown into the economic power it is today.

Think and write about a journey you have had. Was your journey long or short? Where did you go? I had a rather short journey. I decided to go to Vienna for the weekend. I went there by airplane. From the airport to the hotel I took a taxi. In Vienna I decided to visit the most famous and fascinating monuments and historical places. First of all, I visited Stephansdom. The Traveler is the main protagonist and player character of Journey. The Traveler is genderless and its name, age and story are unknown. The Traveler is a Rythulian, much the same as the cloaked figures and companions found throughout the game and in numerous cutscenes. The Traveler is made of cloth and sports a humanoid form. They appear to have no arms and have glowing eyes. The Traveler's default attire is The Red Robe. The Red Robe starts with no scarf, and its scarf's size and magic capacity Journey Beyond the Classroom. 26 likes. Journey Beyond the Classroom's vision is to increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in the... Facebook is showing information to help you better understand the purpose of a Page. See actions taken by the people who manage and post content.