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A MULTICULTURAL CURRICULUM FOR THE THIRD GRADE  
IN THE LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER AT  
THE RIECK AVENUE SCHOOL,  
MILLVILLE, N.J.

by  
Joyce A. Rankin

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
Master of Arts Degree in the  
Graduate Division of  
Rowan University  
May 4, 1998

Approved by

Professor

Date Approved May 4, 1998

## ABSTRACT

Joyce A. Rankin. A Multicultural Curriculum for the Third Grade in the Library Media Center at the Rieck Avenue School, Millville, New Jersey, 1998. (Under the direction of Dr. Holly G. Willett, Program in School and Public Librarianship).

This thesis project developed a multicultural curriculum for the third grade classes at the Rieck Avenue School, Millville, New Jersey, which adhered to the Core Curriculum Standards. The question to be answered was “How can third graders achieve an historical understanding of the varying cultures of New Jersey, the United States, and the world through the library media center curriculum?” Because of the changing demographics of our country and the increase of minority students in our schools, it is imperative that students learn how to appreciate, understand, and interact with people who are ethnically, racially, and culturally different than themselves. The curriculum consisted of six lessons which addressed six different cultures. The evaluation included a pretest, literature study, and a culminating assessment. The cultures covered were Polish, Japanese, African American, Spanish, Pueblo Indian, and Chinese. Students met the planned curriculum with great interest and enthusiasm and reached the established goals for each individual lesson, thus reaching a greater historical understanding of the various cultures of New Jersey, the United States, and the world as mandated by the Core Curriculum Standards.

## MINI -ABSTRACT

Joyce A. Rankin. A Multicultural Curriculum for the Third Grade in the Library Media Center at the Rieck Avenue School, Millville, New Jersey, 1998. (Under the direction of Dr. Holly G. Willett, Program in School and Public Librarianship).

This thesis project developed a library media center curriculum for third grade students based on multicultural literature to develop appreciation and understanding of people who are different from themselves, as mandated by the New Jersey Core Curriculum standards. Students met the established goals of the curriculum with an overall success rate of 90%.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Statement of Purpose

"All students will acquire historical understanding of varying cultures throughout the history of New Jersey, the United States, and the World." So states the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Social Studies (1996, p. 6-13). The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education considers multicultural education as "preparation for the social, political, and economic realities individuals will experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters providing a process for individuals to develop competencies for perceiving, evaluating, and behaving in different cultural settings" (1982, p. 14).

#### The Problem and Purpose

The question to be answered is "How can third graders achieve an historical understanding of the varying cultures of New Jersey, the United States, and the World through the library media center curriculum?"

The purpose of this thesis was to develop, implement, and test a library media center curriculum for the third grade classes at the Rieck Avenue School in Millville, New Jersey, which adheres to the guidelines of the core curriculum standards and advances the students' understanding of multiculturalism through literature.

A multicultural approach to education is essential to engage children of all cultures in learning and to prepare students for the diverse and global society that will be their adult world (Newquist, 1997). "It is imperative that students learn how to interact with and

understand people who are ethnically, racially, and culturally different from themselves. The United States and the world are becoming increasingly more diverse, compact and interdependent" (Gay, 1994, p.11).

Surveys show that there are at least 25 major school districts in the U.S. that now have a dominant minority student population (Thomas, 1994). This change in student population is expected to increase dramatically in the 21st century, both in numbers and in districts affected. It is projected that by the year 2000, over 30% of our students will be children of color (Bennett, 1995), and by the year 2020, one of every two students in the U.S. will be a person of color (Banks, 1991). Research shows that minority students are poorer, drop out or are suspended more often, and achieve at lower levels than their potential would allow (Bennett, 1995).

These demographic changes in the United States, increased student interest, and creative research and scholarship have led many colleges and universities to introduce multiculturalism and diversity into curricular requirements and course content (Meacham, 1996). Teachers must prepare themselves and their children for the challenge of interacting and communicating with diverse races. Reduction of fear, ignorance, and personal detachment are possible benefits of a multicultural education (Wilson, no date). Teacher education programs should be prepared to help teachers preserve the cultural identities of their students (Thomas, 1994). Teachers must first understand the backgrounds of ethnically diverse students and what their cultures demand of them. Teachers must also understand their own possible cultural limitations, which may influence their interactions with and judgments of these students (Solomon, 1996).

Books are effective tools of learning that can aid educators in presenting issues about cultural diversity to their students. The curriculum of many schools includes the use of literary materials to broaden their students' knowledge and understanding of history, culture, and the events that are taking place around them. Books help children to learn about the differences in people and various human conditions that they can relate to their own lives (Van Ausdall, 1994). To develop positive attitudes about and respect for individuals in all cultures, children need many opportunities to read and listen to literature that presents accurate and respectful images of everyone (Norton, 1991). Education must reflect the current demographic changes by creating classrooms that encourage students of all ethnic and cultural groups to develop their talents to the fullest. Literature should be selected that reflects the perspectives, experiences, and values of all ethnic and cultural groups. Culturally diverse literature can enhance student involvement in the curriculum and in the multicultural controversies. In order to extract meaning from literature, students need to connect what is in the text to what they already understand. By using thought-provoking questions, the teacher can enhance students' connections to the literature and establish a relationship of cultural equality between students and teacher (Dietrich and Ralph, 1995). "Teaching the culturally different is more process oriented than content oriented" (Gay, 1994, p.14).

This positive interaction leads children to critical thinking, greater self-esteem, and a greater understanding of both themselves and of others. Students are able to develop new perspectives, choice awareness, interdependence, and cross-cultural appreciation. Students are helped to realize that though our world has much diversity, people of all cultures have the same needs (McDonald, 1996). A poem by Maya Angelou effectively



sums it up:

" We love and lose in China,  
We weep on England's moors,  
and laugh and moan in Guinea,  
and thrive on Spanish shores.  
We seek success in Finland,  
are born and die in Maine,  
In minor ways we differ,  
In major we're the same..."  
-Maya Angelou, Human Family

The growing ethnic diversity in our schools and communities throughout the U.S. creates a challenge to both teachers and librarians. Barbara Wass Van Ausdall, a Missouri teacher, states that "The need to make classroom materials relevant to the students' world and to speak to the future world students will face weighs heavily in my daily routine" (1994, p. 32). In meeting this challenge, Deborah Eldridge believes that the best way to teach multiculturalism is to blend it into the existing curriculum by focusing on the curriculum in a new way, not by adding to it (1997).

### Definitions

Curriculum: Hunkins and Ornstein give five basic views or definitions of curriculum:

1. A curriculum can be defined as a plan for action or a written document that includes strategies for achieving desired goals or ends.
2. Curriculum can, however, be defined broadly - as dealing with the experiences of the learner.
3. Curriculum can be considered as a system for dealing with people and the processes of the organization of personnel and procedures for implementing that system.

4. Curriculum can be viewed as a field of study, comprising it's own foundations and domains of knowledge, as well as it's own research, theory, and principles and it's own specialists to interpret this knowledge.

5. Curriculum can be considered in terms of subject matter (mathematics, science, English, history, and so on), or content (the way we organize and assimilate information). (1993, pp. 9-10).

Core Curriculum Guide: A reference tool that teachers follow when developing their instruction. The guides include objectives, scope and sequence, what is taught and when, activities, materials used, and evaluation. It is developed and mandated by the state for each course of study.

Multicultural Curriculum: "A curriculum that helps children discover their connection to a broader humanity - breaking down the invisibility of working people, women, and people of color. It should help students to identify with a much more profound sense of 'we'. A multicultural curriculum seeks not only to include other cultures but also to tell the more complete story of our social history. It acknowledges the value of the lives of common people" (Bigelow, 1993, p. 7). James Banks, a leading multicultural theorist, defines a multicultural curriculum as one "in which the racial, ethnic, and gender variety that comprises American society is regularly and normally reflected in the materials, references, assumptions, words, and actions of the school's work and life" (Banks, 1988, p. 2-3). There are six major cultural areas to consider in planning a curriculum using multicultural literature. These are Native American, Mexican American, African American, Asian American (ex: Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino, Indian, Arab, Iranian, Armenian, and Pakistani),

Caribbean American (ex: Puerto Rican, Cuban, Haitian, Jamaican, Dominican, and Anglophone Caribbean), and European American (ex: Irish, French, Italian, Spanish, Israeli, Greek, Polish, Slovak, Czech, Russian, and Finnish).

### Limitations

This multicultural curriculum guide has been developed for the third grade classes at the Rieck Avenue School library in Millville, New Jersey. There are three third grade classes consisting of approximately sixty students which meet once a week for thirty-five minutes. The curriculum is limited to skills appropriate for the third grade level. However, this curriculum could be adapted for other third grade classes and could be used as a starting point to develop a multicultural media center curriculum for other grade levels.

### Methods

There were found to be many articles pertaining to the subject of multiculturalism in education. A great number of bibliographies are available that include literature from around the world. However, no curriculum guides were found which addressed the integration of multiculturalism into the school library media center curriculum. This project was to develop, implement, and test a third grade multicultural curriculum for the media center. Six lessons were planned addressing six different cultures which incorporate the use of literature, discussions, a follow up activity, and an evaluation.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

The challenge today, in our ever developing global society, is to develop a multicultural curriculum in the school library media center which addresses the instructional goals of the 1996 Core Curriculum Standards as mandated by the state of New Jersey. Administrators, teachers, and librarians have come to recognize the importance of introducing children to the many cultures that make up the changing world in which they will be living.

#### Historical Context

Traditionally, the values and standards which determined what was appropriate in this country were derived from the Eurocentric mainstream culture. There was a belief that there was only one acceptable way to do things in order to be an American and a normal human being. Anyone deviating from these norms was considered to be unAmerican and as such, was subjected to scorn, ridicule, and the denial of equal access. Multicultural education is a potential means for correcting this traditional way of thinking (Gay, 1994).

There is also a frequently made mistake that members of ethnic minority groups already know their culture and history and that it is relevant only to them. Proponents of multicultural education disagree with this idea. They believe that members of a specific group are not always knowledgeable about their ethnicity and that they do not have exclusive ownership to that particular culture. Acquiring knowledge about various ethnic

groups is appropriate for all students. Ethnic pluralism is important for respecting, appreciating, valuing, and celebrating diversity for all people the world over (Gay, 1994).

### Justification

Educators today are turning more and more to multicultural education to respond to the increasing student diversity in educational institutions. Multicultural education also aims to reduce prejudice and racism and to develop a positive attitude towards all citizens. Schools today are rich in student diversity. A growing number of American classrooms and schools contain a complex mix of races, cultures, languages, and religious affiliations. There are two other sources of diversity which are becoming increasingly prominent as well. These are the widening gap between rich and poor students which creates more social class diversity, and an increasing recognition of the number of gay students and teachers (Banks, 1994). A multicultural curriculum answers the need to understand the ethnic diversity of human culture (Lawrence, 1997).

Judy McDonald, an elementary school librarian, reads many books to her students so that they can come to realize that “though our world has much diversity, people of all cultures have the same needs” (McDonald, 1996, p. 1). There are many articles available that discuss how to choose the best books on multiculturalism.

A great number of bibliographies are accessible on-line that cover many different cultures, some of which are annotated. Kay Vandergrift has compiled several lists of multicultural books that are divided into categories: African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American, and Native-American. She has made a special effort to find realistic stories and images, stating that "all children deserve to see positive images of children

like themselves in the books they read” (Vandergrift, 1997, p.1).

Many workshops on cultural diversity are being conducted for teachers in order to aid in the development of new strategies for incorporating the multicultural experience into classroom active learning strategies. “ In order to better prepare themselves, teachers must understand their own cultural limitations as well as the ethnic backgrounds of their students” (Solomon, 1996). Mohammed Bilal says that “celebrating diversity often requires changing one’s own perceptions, attitudes, and actions” (Bilal, 1998, p. 16). He has developed a twelve step, self-awareness, self-improvement program for becoming more aware of, and more appreciative of our diverse population.

Colleges and universities, recognizing the demographic changes in the United States, are introducing multiculturalism and diversity into their curriculums (Meacham, 1996). "Multiculturalism is being taught to educators and students. The educators of the future will merge the multiculturalism into Americulture” (Czubaj, 1997, p.1). There are many articles and workshops currently available which develop new strategies for incorporating the multicultural experience into classroom active-learning strategies. In order to better prepare themselves, teachers must understand their own cultural limitations as well as the ethnic backgrounds of their students (Solomon, 1996).

### Curriculum Development

Developing a library media center curriculum which integrates multiculturalism into core standards requires a study of specific curriculum objectives. In selecting activities, it must be remembered that “learning takes place through the experiences which the learner has” (Tyler, 1969, p. 63) and that “these learning experiences are helpful in developing social attitudes” (Tyler, 1969, p. 75).

In the development of a multicultural curriculum for third graders, it is necessary to become familiar with cognitive development and Piaget's theory of developmental psychology. He states that between the years of seven to about twelve, children are at the concrete operational period. Thus, although they recognize both invariant and variant aspects of the environment and are capable of logical reasoning, they still depend upon direct, concrete experiences, or the ability to imagine such experiences vividly (Brophy and Good, 1986, pp. 63-65).

Particular attention should be paid to Bloom's taxonomy during the planning and assessment of instructions. Effective learning takes place at all six cognitive levels - knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Brophy and Good, 1986, pp. 139-142).

In developing plans for teaching multicultural education today, the new model moves away from the traditional way of stereotyping children as products of their ethnic culture. The new model proposed is called the Anti Bias and Ecological Model (Gomez, 1991). This model considers each child a unique individual and looks at such factors as family, community, and socioeconomic status. It acknowledges the great diversity that exists within each traditional racial and cultural group and recognizes the variety that exists within these groups. The child is the main factor and not the culture. Thus, it is recognized that each child has a unique culture and ensures that each child will feel included and valued for himself (Wardle, 1996).

It is important to select materials and develop a curriculum that reflects the values, attitudes, views, and experiences of all cultural groups and subgroups. Much attention should be given to avoiding stereotypes and to focusing on positive, authentic, factual,

meaningful, and relevant aspects of the various cultures (Norton, 1991). “Teaching about culture is not the addition of something new. We already teach about culture every day by what we include or exclude from our curriculum. The goal is to make this aspect of the curriculum more complete, more accurate, and more sensitive” (Lee, 1993, p. 3).

Multicultural activities generated in the library can be incorporated and extended into other subject areas across the curriculum. This can be accomplished by collaboration with classroom teachers and other librarians in the district. Parents, community resources, and field trips can also be utilized to supply additional information and assistance (Howley and Oliver, 1992).

One of a teacher’s first responsibilities is to remain sensitive to the community by understanding his/her students’ cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Thus, a curriculum can be developed that is relevant and meaningful to the students (Przybyla, 1996). Students’ futures can be positively influenced by their teachers. By integrating a different culture/country into the curriculum, teachers can develop students’ views toward internationalism.

Aspects in curriculum development to be considered are the uniqueness of the individual child, appropriate learning skills and activities, diversity of materials, development of positive interactions with others, development of self esteem, critical thinking skills, written skills, research skills, and effective techniques to assist students in reaching these goals. The proliferation of multicultural literature available today illustrates the current desire to more strongly identify with and learn about one’s particular cultural heritage as well as the heritage of other groups. It is important that children be exposed to positive images like themselves and their ethnic background in



their literature. These realistic portrayals provide a life affirming identity for them and help to develop their feelings of self worth and belonging. Realistic and powerful visual images foster these feelings. It is especially pertinent that this literature be factual and realistic, depicting children in contemporary settings. Thus children are encouraged to reach beyond their immediate boundaries and into the realm of limitless future possibilities (Vandergrift, 1997).

The development of a multicultural curriculum in the library media center assists in "providing intellectual and physical access to information and ideas for a diverse population whose needs are changing rapidly" (*Information Power*, p. 3). Media specialists must also recognize that in order to meet specific curriculum objectives, it is imperative to "ensure equality and freedom of access to information and ideas, unimpeded by social, cultural, economic, geographic, or technologic constraints" (*Information Power*, p. 5).

As Mary R. Somerville, A.L.A. President said in her message to the American Library Association, "The global village is here --- and in other U.S. towns and cities" (1996, p. 35). She was referring not only to people from various cultures living together in the U.S., but to the Internet and the ease with which we communicate with people around the world. It is up to librarians to keep pace with the changes all of this signifies.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

#### Introduction

In developing a library media center curriculum promoting cultural awareness, it is important to recognize the growing diversity in our schools and communities and to answer the need to understand this ethnic diversity (Lawrence, 1997). Therefore, it was necessary to research the school's population as to numbers and ethnicity.

The Rieck Avenue School is located in the city of Millville, in Cumberland County, New Jersey. It contains grades pre-kindergarten through seventh grade and has a current student body of 685. Of these, 65% are white, 10% are black, 21% are Hispanic, 0.3% are Native Americans, and 2.5% are Asians.

To develop a library media center multicultural curriculum, it was first necessary to review the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards and identify areas that could be incorporated into the planned curriculum. This study addressed the social studies and language arts Core Content Standards and how they can be implemented into the development of a multicultural curriculum. In creating a new curriculum, teachers must also decide how they will assess the final results of the lessons.

The third grade classes at the Rieck Avenue School were selected for this study as it is about this age that students become aware of and interested in the greater world around them. Piaget found students at this level start to ask many questions and strive to express themselves verbally. Students' thinking can be facilitated by formulating meaningful, thought provoking questions, thus fostering verbal communication. This socialization

assists children in learning to think in words and to express themselves verbally (Brophy & Good, 1986). There are three third grade classes with a total of 61 students, consisting of 47 Whites, 7 Blacks, 5 Hispanics, and 2 Asians.

It is important to understand the skills and abilities that are appropriate for this grade level. According to Piaget, students between seven and twelve are at the concrete operational period of development. Although capable of logical reasoning, they cannot think in the abstract but depend upon concrete experiences with which to develop their thinking skills. In developing learning objectives, particular attention was also paid to the six major categories in Bloom's Taxonomy: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Brophy and Good, 1986).

Discussions with the three third grade teachers were held to ascertain what multicultural activities they were going to be covering in the classroom. This aided in the selection of suitable literature and extension activities to be incorporated into the library curriculum. Learning skills were developed that built upon each other and aided students in life long learning skills.

Three years ago, the Millville School District, recognizing the need for cultural awareness, implemented a new literature based enrichment program which addresses this concern. Developed under the auspices of the gifted and talented program, teachers from that department meet with grades one through five, three times a year, using children's literature along with follow-up activities. Because the district has developed this cultural awareness program through literature and the visual arts, it was necessary to review what those teachers were planning for the year. Discussions were held with the two teachers who teach the cultural awareness program at the Rieck Avenue School so

that there would be no duplication, but rather an extension, of what they are teaching in the classrooms.

It was also important to keep the principal current on what was being done regarding the development of this curriculum. A permission form had to be provided for the parents to grant approval for their child to participate in this study. This form had to be approved by both the principal and the Millville Board of Education before it could be sent home.

### Description of Methodology

After these considerations were addressed, it was time to plan the lessons. In selecting the literature to be read, it was important to address the values, attitudes, views, and experiences of the various cultural groups in the school. Careful attention was paid to the content and format of the literature so that it would promote unbiased, positive, and factual information about the various cultures. Because of the great quantity of multicultural literature available today, it was difficult to limit selection to only a few cultures. Therefore, it was important to be selective of the literature chosen. It was also helpful to know the ethnic makeup of the students in the school so that selection could be made which represented some of the predominant cultures as well as less familiar ones.

After selecting the literature to be read, meaningful extension activities for assessment needed to be selected, keeping in mind the interests and abilities of students in the third grade. Implementing a variety of activities helped to keep student interest high. In planning, materials and activities were selected which addressed both the cognitive and the affective domains. Based on research and the knowledge of the Rieck Avenue third graders' abilities, a percentage of successful completion rate was

established for each lesson accordingly.

When this material was all gathered, lesson plans were written and the core curriculum matrix was developed. This aided in any revisions that needed to be made in order to cover as many areas as possible.

### Procedures

Six lessons were planned around the reading of literature, with one specific culture to be represented each week. Each lesson was designed on the same framework: introduction of the subject, identification of the country, brief discussion, reading of the literature, discussion of the book, and a culminating activity.

The first week, students were asked to define the word immigration. None of the students knew the meaning of the word, although several got the word emancipation confused with immigration. Immigration was explained and Poland was found on the map. *An Ellis Island Christmas* by Maxinne Rhea Leighton (Puffin, 1992) was read, followed by a discussion about immigration to this country, the Statue of Liberty, and Ellis Island. The librarian then showed students some necessary items tied up in a sheet as if she was actually immigrating, along with a real passport. Students were then asked to list eight items, on a separate sheet of paper, that they would bring with them if they were immigrating to this country at the beginning of this century.

The second lesson was based upon the story *How My Parents Learned to Eat* by Ina Friedman (Houghton Mifflin, 1984). Students were asked if they knew any Japanese customs and how they compared to customs in the United States. Because teachers from the cultural awareness program had been discussing Japan in conjunction with the Olympics, a large number of students were familiar with Japan and some of the Japanese

culture. Japan was located on the map and then the story was read. After a short discussion, students were given a librarian-created worksheet in which they compared customs in Japan and the United States. Ideas for this assessment were garnered from Braddon's *Cultural Awareness Through Literature*. (Carson - Dellosa, 1993). For this lesson, the teacher sparked added interest by wearing a Japanese kimono, shoes, socks and carrying a fan. Students were shown chopsticks, a soup bowl, and Japanese money.

For the third lesson, *The Patchwork Quilt* by Valerie Flourney (Dial Books, 1984) was read. Students were asked if they had ever seen a patchwork quilt, seen one being made, or made one themselves in any form. The librarian then exhibited several quilts and explained how they were made, who made them, and to whom they were given. After reading the story, a brief discussion was held explaining how families can preserve their history through various types of quilts. Students were then instructed to design and color a quilt square, using their crayons, on a six inch square piece of white paper. The squares were then glued to a seven inch square of colored paper and arranged on the wall to create a "class quilt". The idea for this project was selected from Eldredge's *Teacher Talk: Multicultural Lesson Plans for the Elementary Classroom* (Allyn and Bacon, 1998).

The fourth week, students were asked if they knew any Spanish words, or, if they could speak Spanish. The teacher then spoke several sentences in Spanish. The book selected for reading this week was *I Speak English for My Mom* by Muriel Stanek (Albert Whitman, 1989). After a short discussion of the story, students were given a pencil and a plain sheet of white paper with lines dividing it into eight sections. A librarian-created list of Spanish words and their English meanings was provided on a different sheet of

paper. Students were then instructed to write a Spanish word and the corresponding English word on each square. Upon completion, students were able to cut apart each section and staple it together to create a little Spanish word book.

The fifth week students were asked if they had ever heard of the Pueblo Indians or knew where they lived. A map of the United States was displayed and students were shown Arizona and New Mexico and the location of several Pueblo reservations. The book selected for this lesson was *Pueblo Boy: Growing Up in Two Worlds* by Marcia Keegan (Cobblehill, 1991). After the story a brief discussion about the book was held. Students were then given a worksheet with a picture of a precut (using an exacto knife) Pueblo on it in order to construct and color a pop up Pueblo. The worksheet for this lesson was selected from Moore and Sorvillo's *Pyramids to Pueblos: 15 Pop up Models for Students to Make* (Scholastic, 1995).

For the last lesson students were asked if they knew the sign of the Chinese horoscope they were born under. China was then located on the map. The book selected for this lesson was *Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan's Chinese New Year* by Kate Walters and Madeline Slovenz (Scholastic, 1990). A discussion about the story was held and the Chinese horoscope was explained. Students were then given worksheets of the Chinese horoscope along with the corresponding years. They were directed to find out what sign they were born under and then color, cut out, and glue together the complete horoscope. This lesson's worksheet was selected from Sullivan's *Discovering China* (Hayes, 1995).

### Analysis

At the end of each lesson, careful attention was paid as to how well each lesson went, what revisions needed to be made in the curriculum, and how well the students met the

pre-determined objectives set forth. Notes and observations were taken during and after each lesson and papers from lessons one, two, and four were graded. Lessons three, five, and six were observed and assessed for a successful completion rate.

In preparing each lesson, props and materials needed to be gathered. The children were allowed to handle the props, such as the Japanese money, chopsticks, and fan. To promote student reading on the subject while their interest was still high, it was important to gather a selection of other books dealing with the same culture discussed that day and display them prominently so that students could find them easily during book selection.

If student interest remains high, additional activities can be provided for the class. Multiculturalism is an area that is developing rapidly and permeating through all the curriculum areas in the Millville School District today.



## Chapter 4

### Results

#### Introduction

This library media center curriculum was developed in order to broaden the third grade students' understanding of multiculturalism in our society today. In developing the curriculum, particular attention was paid to the social studies and the language arts Core Content Standards in the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards.

During the lesson planning, the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy were taken into consideration. The most effective learning takes place when students are encouraged to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information. Six separate lessons were planned which covered six separate cultural areas. Activities were selected which covered a variety of formats and learning activities. A matrix was developed for each lesson and a combined matrix for all six lessons was written.

Each lesson began with some pretest questions to elicit the children's level of knowledge about the culture to be discussed. A book was read and then the children participated in a discussion related to the story and the follow up activity. The children's successful completion of each activity was used to evaluate each lesson. The lessons were met with great enthusiasm by the students and they were actively engaged throughout. The use of props captured students' interest from the very beginning of each lesson and they participated eagerly in the discussions. When given the activity to accomplish for the day, they eagerly set to work. Table 1 (on page 21) summarizes the results of the curriculum assessment.

Table 1

Percentage of Students Passing Assessment

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Total
Polish immigration	n=20 84%	n=21 88%	n=21 90%	n=62 87%
Japanese	n=12 75%	n=16 81%	n=14 86%	n=42 81%
African-American	n=19 100%	n=23 87%	n=20 100%	n=62 96%
Spanish	n=18 76%	n=17 83%	n=18 83%	n=53 81%
Pueblo Indian	n=19 92%	n=20 96%	n=20 97%	n=59 95%
Chinese	n=19 99%	n=20 100%	n=20 98%	n=59 99%

Descriptions of Lessons

The first lesson was built around the story *An Ellis Island Christmas* (Puffin, 1992). Students were first asked if they knew what immigration meant and where Poland was located. None of the students knew the answer to either question. Some students got the word immigration mixed up with the word emancipation. They were fascinated with all aspects of the story. It was hard for them to imagine childrens' lives at the turn of the century without all the conveniences that they have access to today, such as television,

electronic games, tapes, and even cars. They were very interested in the selection of items packed for immigrating to this country. It was difficult for some of them to think of important items to pack other than toys. One class was particularly interested in New York City because they were just studying about all the sights to see there. Students were asked to make a list of eight important items that they would need in the new country. Eighty percent were expected to be able to compile a suitable list. Class one had 84% correct, class two had 88% percent correct, and class three had 90% percent correct with a total of 87% percent correct for all three classes.

The second lesson was planned around the book *How My Parents Learned to Eat* (Houghton Mifflin, 1984). Students were asked if they knew any Japanese customs such as how they eat, how they sit at a table, what clothes they wear, and how they greet each other and say goodbye. Because teachers from the cultural awareness program have selected Japan to discuss this year, 60% of the students knew some of these answers. One student, who takes karate, knows a lot of Japanese words and sentences and he said them for the class, along with a bow when he was done. Added interest was created by the librarian wearing Japanese clothing, and showing chopsticks and money. So much so that several coins were missing when the first class left. Students were given a worksheet in which they were to match the corresponding English and Japanese customs. Eighty percent were to complete the worksheet correctly. Class one completed 75% correctly, class two completed 81% correctly, and class three completed 86% correctly, with a total of 81% correctly completing the assignment.

Lesson three was structured around the book *The Patchwork Quilt* (Dial Books, 1984). Students were asked if they had ever seen or made a patchwork quilt. Seven had

seen a quilt, none had made any kind of quilt. The students were interested in where all the fabrics came from and how long it took to make a patchwork quilt. When shown several quilts, they were quite intrigued by them, especially when told their history. Students were then asked to each create a patchwork square in order to make a “class quilt” that was to be hung on the wall. They eagerly set to work. It was expected that 90% of the students would complete a square. Class one had a 100% percent completion rate, class two had a 87% completion rate, and class three had a 100% completion rate for a total completion rate of 96%.

The fourth lesson was built around the story *I Speak English for My Mom* (Albert Whitman, 1989). Students were initially asked if they knew any Spanish words or knew how to speak Spanish. Five students speak Spanish. After a discussion of the story, students were given a list of Spanish words with their English meanings and a blank sheet of paper divided into eight sections. They were directed to write Spanish words along with the English meanings on each section, cut it apart, and staple it together to make a Spanish word book. Eighty percent of the students were expected to identify Spanish words and complete the word books satisfactorily. Class one had 76% completion, class two had 83% completion, and class three had 83% completion for a total of 81% completion.

The fifth lesson was planned around the book *Pueblo Boy: Growing Up in Two Worlds* (Cobblehill, 1991). Students were asked if they had heard about the Pueblo Indians and knew where and how some of them live even today. Only three of the students knew anything about the Pueblos. After the story, a brief discussion was held. Students were then shown a completed Pueblo pop up and given the worksheet, along

with instructions on how to create their own pop up. It was expected that 85% of the students would be able to identify a pueblo and complete the project successfully. Class one had 92% successful completion, class two had 96% successful completion, and class three had 97% successful completion. The total completion rate was 95% for all three classes.

Lesson six was structured around the story *Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan's Chinese New Year* (Scholastic, 1990). Students were asked if they knew which animal represented their birth year according to the Chinese horoscope. None of the children in class one knew, 40% of class two knew their sign, and one student in class three knew. One boy, who is Chinese, not only knew his sign, but every member of his family's as well. After reading the story and holding a brief discussion, students were shown the worksheets with the Chinese horoscope and given instructions to find their sign and circle it. They were then directed to color the entire horoscope, cut it out, and glue it together. The students had a good time finding their sign and several found the sign of other family members as well. One class even asked their teacher if she knew her sign, she didn't know and they were happy to tell her. Ninety percent of the students were expected to be able to identify their sign and complete the assignment successfully. Class one had 99% completion, class two had 100% completion, and class three had 98% completion. The total for successful completion was 99%.

### Analysis

Time constraints for each period were the biggest obstacle. There was not enough time to cover as much material as the teacher and students wanted to. The students had a lot of questions and there could have been a lot more discussion about each topic.

Because of this, it was sometimes difficult to keep moving along. In doing this again, it might be better to break each lesson into two periods in order to cover more information on each subject. The students were very interested and extremely receptive to all of the lessons planned. Enthusiasm and involvement was high. By collecting and displaying other books about the culture or subject discussed during each class lesson, interested students were readily able find these books during book selection.

There is a challenge in the development of any new curriculum. However, in meeting our responsibilities to the entire school community and the changing world we live in today, it is imperative that we bring multicultural literature into the library/media center. There is a wide range of materials available today which can be utilized in order for students to become aware of and more sensitive to all members of our increasingly diverse society.

The world is shrinking, and students need to learn strategies for adapting to change and for interacting with and understanding people who are ethnically, racially, and culturally different from themselves. From what this curriculum has shown, the students are up to the challenge.

## Chapter 5

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### Summary

This thesis was been a study of the development and implementation of a literature based multicultural curriculum for the library media center. Because of our increasingly diverse society and shrinking world, students need to learn how to interact with and understand peoples of varying cultures and backgrounds. By identifying the commonalities of various cultures, students are better able to establish lines of communication with those who are different than themselves (Ralph, 1995). World interdependence and appreciation of other cultures need to be fostered and developed for the good of our future, worldwide society . By exposing children at an early age to an understanding of these differences, they may be better able to develop an appreciation for them, without bias and prejudice. Many schools use literature along with other library materials in their curricula in order to broaden students' awareness and understanding of history, culture, and events in the world today. Books assist students in learning about differences in others that they can relate to in their own lives (Van Ausdall, 1994). Because of the rapid development of technology today, we truly live in a global village (Somerville, 1988).

The three third grade classes at the Rieck Avenue School were selected for the development of this curriculum. The planning and implementation of the curriculum was addressed to the question of how third graders can achieve an historical understanding of the varying cultures of New Jersey, the United States and the World

through the library media center curriculum. Lessons were planned around the Core Curriculum Content Standards as they pertain to language arts literacy and social studies and a matrix was developed which showed which areas were met.

### Conclusions

Books are an effective method of reaching children of this age as they aid teachers in presenting issues about cultural diversity and understanding. The three classes received all six lessons with much enthusiasm and interest. They showed great curiosity about others and how they lived. Because five of the stories read concerned actual children of today, the students were better able to understand and relate to the differences in how these children, contemporaries of theirs, live differently than they live today but still have the same feelings and do many of the same things as Millville children. Students enthusiastically and actively participated in the discussions about the stories and the children and cultures represented. They were eager to learn more and asked many questions. The variation in activities kept students' interest high and they eagerly set to work completing the projects assigned. Overall, the students were extremely receptive to the entire curriculum and to the follow up activities.

### Recommendations

The time for integrating multiculturalism into today's curriculum has come. The importance cannot be stressed highly enough. In the library / media center, time constraints presented the most difficulty. Because students had a lot of questions, it was difficult to keep to the time frame, get involved in discussions and explanations, and still have time in the period left for book selection. It might be advisable to develop each lesson around two class periods instead of one. The use of various materials such as the



kimono, quilts, etc. provided for added interest. More props could be added and displayed prominently around the library, along with selected books to go along with each lesson.

In the planning and implementation of any multicultural curriculum today, it is most important to be selective in the choice of literature to be read. There is a wealth of literature available, however, not all of it is authentically representative or unbiased of the culture represented. Selecting realistic and positive images for children to identify with is of the utmost importance (Vandergrift, 1997).

Teachers and students need to continue to explore the richness and variety of the many cultures and customs represented in our society and the world today. Tomorrow's world will see multiculturalism develop into Americulture (Czubaj, 1997). Thus, it is important for students to be encouraged to appreciate and understand those who are different from themselves. An awareness of various countries and cultures also serves to develop a desire for travel in order to see more of our diverse world, ultimately leading to the further development of worldwide understanding and acceptance.

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Appendix A

Letter to Parents

Dear Parents / Guardians,

I am a graduate student in the School and Public Librarianship Program, at Rowan University, Glassboro, N.J. I will be conducting a research project as part of my Master's thesis concerning the development of a multicultural curriculum in the library which promotes cultural awareness through literature.

I am requesting permission for your child to participate in this research. The goal of the study is to develop a curriculum which promotes multicultural appreciation and understanding.

We will be reading literature from around the world, discussing the books read, and participating in activities which will further advance students' understanding of both the stories read and the various cultures they refer to.

Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate in this study will have absolutely no effect on your child's standing in his / her class.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at the Rieck Avenue School library at 327-6087, or you may contact Dr. Holly Willett at 256-4759. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joyce Rankin  
Librarian

Please indicate whether or not you wish to have your child participate in this study by checking the appropriate statement below and returning this letter to your child's teacher by February 17.

\_\_\_\_\_ I grant permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_  
to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not grant permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_  
to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix B

### Lesson Plans

#### Lesson One

Pretest: Ask students if they know what immigration means and what they would pack if they were immigrating to America.

Objectives: To introduce students to an historical understanding of immigration.  
To identify Poland and New York City on globe  
To develop listening skills and to discuss the story  
To create a list of eight items they would bring to America if they were immigrating here at the turn of the century.

Materials: *An Ellis Island Christmas* by Maxinne Rhea Leighton  
Globe, pencils, paper  
Sheet tied up with items packed to bring to America  
Passport

Procedure: Locate Poland and New York City on globe  
Read story: *An Ellis Island Christmas*  
Discuss story, show bundle of items and passport.  
Students write list of eight necessary items to bring with them if they were immigrating to America.

Evaluation: Written list of eight necessary items they'd bring to America  
80% of students will be able to compile list

## Lesson Two

- Pretest: Ask students what Japanese customs they know about
- Objectives: To compare and contrast Japanese and American customs  
To locate Japan on globe  
To develop listening skills and to discuss the story  
To complete worksheet
- Materials: *How My Parents Learned to Eat* by Ina R. Friedman  
Globe  
Worksheet, pencils  
Kimono, socks, shoes, fan, money, chopsticks, bowl
- Procedure: Locate Japan on globe  
Read story: *How My Parents Learned to Eat*  
Discuss differences between Japanese and American customs  
Complete worksheet
- Evaluation: Completed worksheet  
80% students will complete worksheet correctly

Customs

Japanese

U.S.

---

Eating utensils

---

Sitting at a table

---

Eating soup

---

Eating meat and potatoes

---

Clothing

---

Greeting / parting

---

sip from bowl  
shake hands  
chopsticks  
Kimono  
chair  
spoon

dress, pants, shirt  
knife, fork, spoon  
chopsticks  
cushion  
fork  
bow



### Lesson Three

- Pretest: Ask students if they have ever seen or made a patchwork quilt
- Objectives: To identify how families can preserve their histories through the making of patchwork quilts
- To develop listening skills
- To work together to design and make a class friendship quilt
- Materials: Book: *The Patchwork Quilt* by Valerie Flourney
- Quilts to show
- 6 x 6 squares of white construction paper
- 7 x 7 squares of colored construction paper
- Large sheet of bulletin board paper for backing
- crayons and glue
- Procedure: Read story: *The Patchwork Quilt*
- Discuss the story and ways families can preserve their history through the making of patchwork quilts
- Create quilt squares and “piece” together
- Evaluation: Completed class quilt
- 90% students will complete quilt squares

## Lesson Four

Pretest: Students were asked if they knew any Spanish words or knew how to speak Spanish

Objectives: To make a Spanish word book  
To develop listening skills

Materials: Book: *I Speak Spanish for My Mom* by Muriel Stanek  
List of corresponding Spanish and English words  
Plain white paper with lines dividing it into eight sections  
Pencils, scissors, stapler

Procedure: Read: *I Speak Spanish for My Mom*  
Discuss story, Spanish language  
Create Spanish word book

Evaluation: Completed Spanish / English word book  
80% students complete word books accurately

## English and Spanish Words

### Words

book	el libro
pencil	el lápiz
paper	el papel
map	el mapa
chair	la silla
desk	el escritorio
door	la puerta
window	la ventana
wall	la pared
floor	el piso
flag	la bandera
clock	el reloj
hello	hola
goodbye	adios
thank you	gracias

### Colors

red	rojo
blue	azul
yellow	amarillo
green	verde
orange	naranja
purple	morado
black	negro
white	blanco
brown	marrón

### Numbers

1	uno
2	dos
3	tres
4	cuatro
5	cinco
6	seis
7	siete
8	ocho
9	nueve
10	diez

## Lesson Five

Pretest: Ask students what they know about the Pueblo Indians, where they live, and what type of housing many of them live in

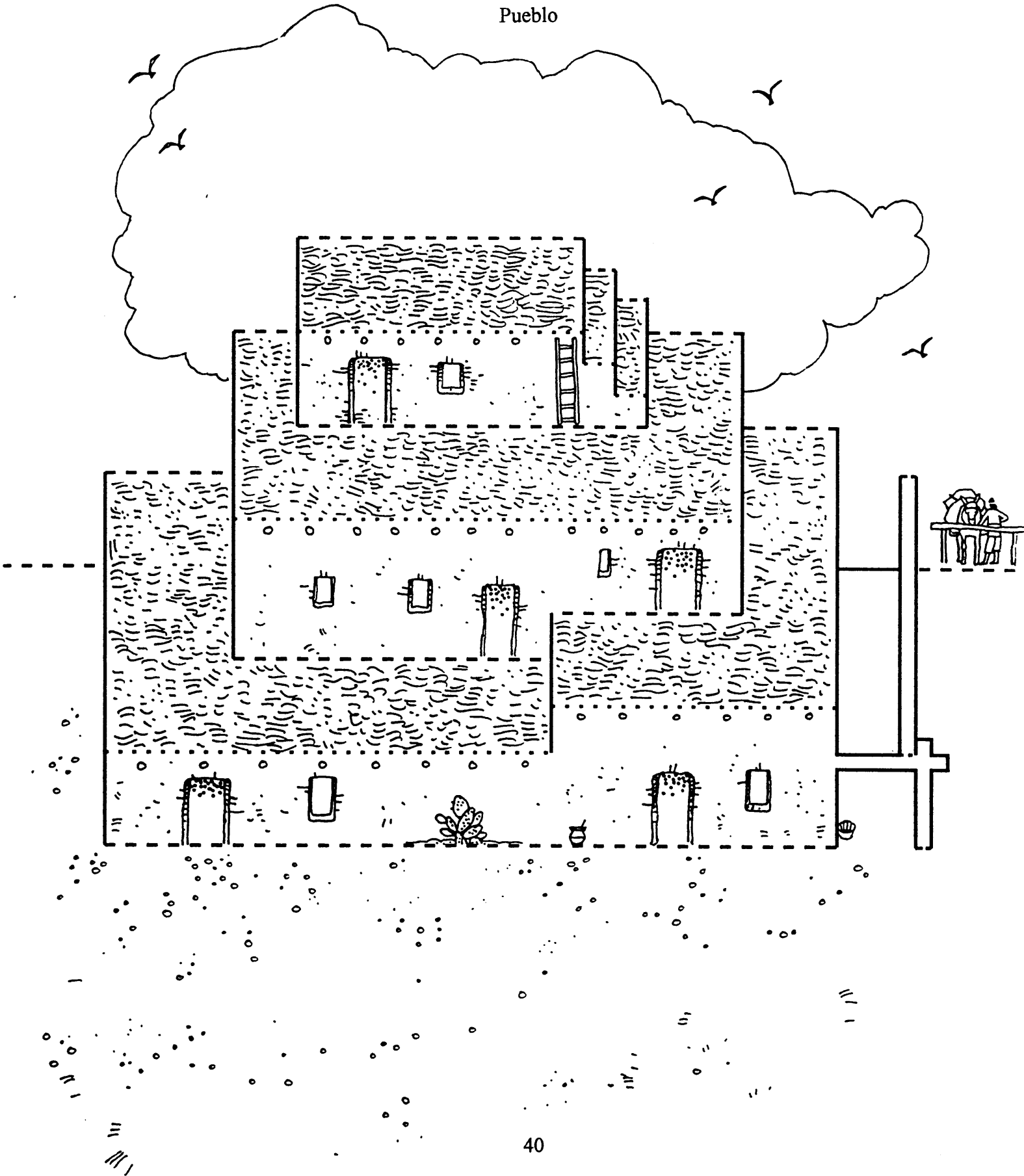
Objectives: To identify Pueblo Indians, their culture, and their housing  
To locate Pueblo reservations on U.S. map  
To develop listening skills  
To create pop up pueblo

Materials: Book: *Pueblo Boy: Growing Up in Two Worlds* by Marcia Keegan  
Map of United States  
Worksheet of pop up pueblo, reproduced from Moore, H. & Sorvillo, C. (1995). *Pyramids to Pueblos: 15 Pop up Models for Students to Make*.  
Scissors, crayons, exacto knife (teacher)

Procedure: Prior to lesson, cut solid lines on worksheet with exacto knife  
Locate Arizona and New Mexico on map and identify some of the Pueblo Indian reservations  
Read: *Pueblo Boy: Growing Up in Two Worlds*  
Discuss story and Pueblo Indians of today  
Create pop up pueblo

Evaluation: Completed pop up pueblo  
85% students will complete project

Pueblo



## Lesson Six

Pretest: Ask students if they know what year in the Chinese horoscope they were born under

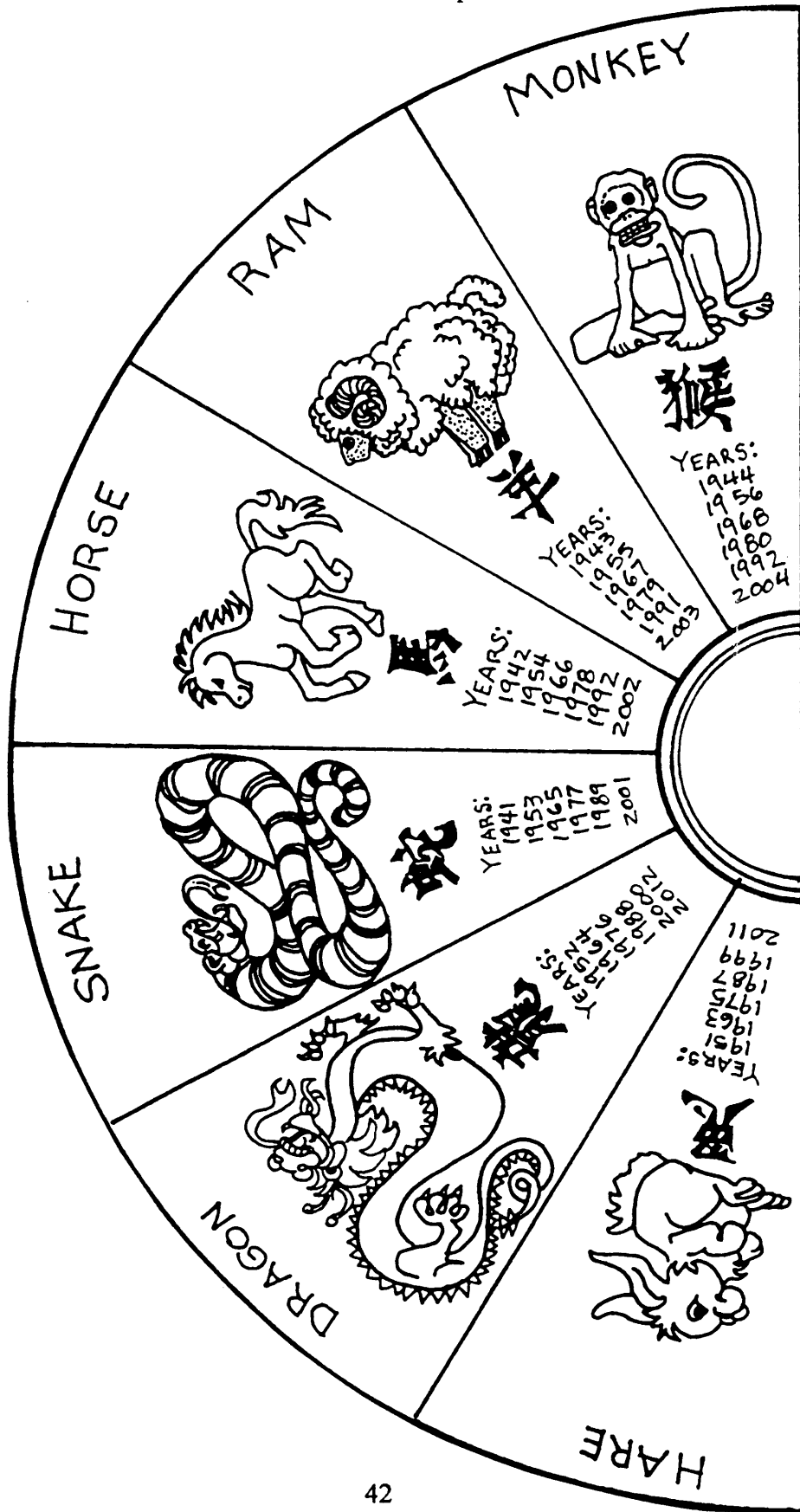
Objectives: To locate China on the globe  
To identify the Chinese New Year and the Chinese horoscope  
To develop listening skills

Materials: Book: *Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan's Chinese New Year* by Kate Waters and Madeline Slovenz-Low  
Globe, crayons, scissors, glue  
Worksheet reproduced from Sullivan, D. (1995). *Discovering China*. Pittsburgh, PA: Hayes.

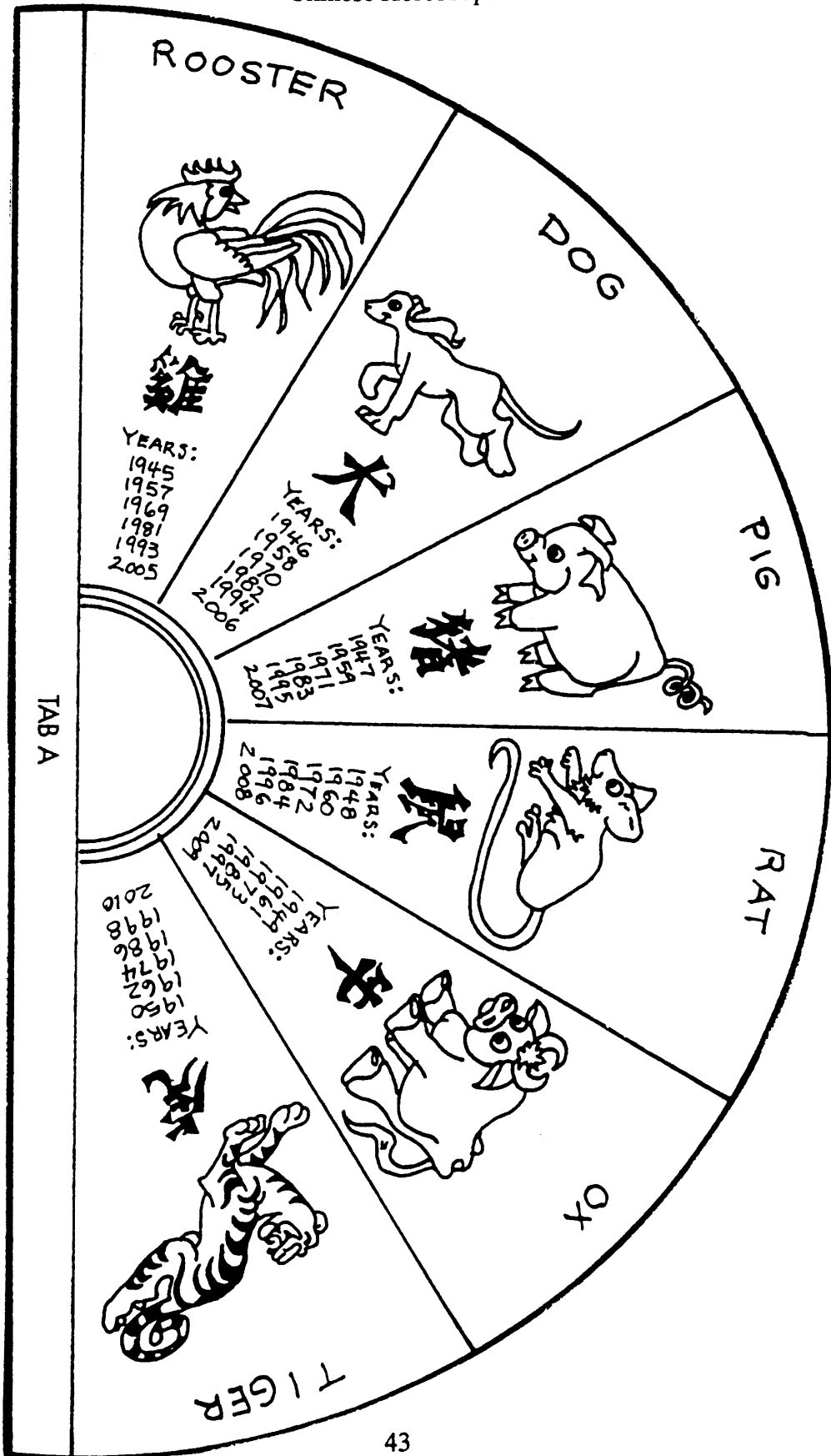
Procedure: Locate China on the globe  
Read story: *Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan's Chinese New Year*  
Discuss story  
Students identify what year they were born under in the Chinese horoscope  
Students create Chinese horoscope

Evaluation: Completed horoscope with student's animal sign circled  
92% completion

Chinese Horoscope



Chinese Horoscope





## Appendix C

### Matrix of Core Curriculum Content Standards Met With Multicultural Curriculum for the Library

Standard number - Cumulative progress indicator

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Language Arts	3.1;	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13
Literacy	3.2;	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
	3.3;	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
	3.4;	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15
	3.5;	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16

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Social	6.2;	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,
Studies	6.3;	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
	6.4;	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
	6.5;	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
	6.6;	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
	6.7;	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
	6.8;	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
	6.9;	1, 2, 3

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