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California State University

San Bernardino

IMPLEMENTING LITERATURE-BASED CURRICULUM

IN PRIMARY GRADES

A Project Submitted to

The Faculty of the School of Education

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the

Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Education: Reading Option

By

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San Bernardino, California

1990

PARCHMENT BLEED

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SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Improving reading instruction in schools today should be a concern for all educators. Reading becomes meaningful when reading becomes real to the student. Teachers need to teach reading as a whole language experience that makes reading real and relevant for the student. The use of literature in the classroom is a way that teachers can help make reading enjoyable for the students. Basal readers, (which are the basic reading texts of elementary schools) dominate reading instruction in the United States. Since basals do not stress the importance of reading as whole, real and relevant, students are not learning to read in a natural way.

Typically a good literacy program provides a literate environment. Books, magazines, signs, packages, and posters encourage reading through print found in the student's environment. Primary grades may have mailboxes, writing centers, a library corner and a newsstand. Learning centers are common too. Money usually spent on basal texts can be used to build a rich literature library so that students can choose books to read out of a wide range of literature.

This project was developed to help reading teachers, student teachers and K-12 teachers understand what

whole language and literature-based programs are about. This project format was used so that teachers could try some lessons with their classes almost immediately after reading the project.

The project allows teachers to read a quick overview of the three major reading models. It also allows teachers to see the strengths and weaknesses of the models and gives them ideas on how to incorporate the models into their teaching methods.

Lessons given in the appendix give teachers many options and allows them to use ideas that fit their style of teaching. Many teachers will feel more comfortable with certain ideas presented than others and there are enough lessons presented so that teachers can choose their preference.

For this project a list of ten books and ten thematic lessons were used to show teachers how to begin a literature-based reading program. The units were arranged so that the teacher can use the book to teach many different subjects. Also the books can be used for different themes throughout the year. The ideas provided will give teachers an incentive to create thematic units from stories that they have read, feel familiar with and love.

The review of literature gives teachers the opportunity to read what experts in the field are

learning about the teaching of reading. The review also shows the agreements experts have on the subject as well as the disagreements.

The organization of this project will allow teachers to learn about whole language and literature-based programs with ease.

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RATIONALE

Many teachers today are changing their methods of teaching reading. Teachers are slowly changing from a basal approach to a literature-based program. The purpose of this project is to assist teachers in moving from a basal reading program to a literature reading program. The project will also provide some resources and ideas that can be used in the classroom to help children learn to love reading.

Sometimes teachers have valid concerns about starting a new way of teaching. It surely can cause anxiety when an already overworked teacher feels there is no time to prepare for lessons let alone prepare for a whole new reading program. Part of the fear or reluctance teachers have is the unknown. Teachers need to see that they can make this change gradually and without frustration. Teachers will see that a literature-based reading program can be used to incorporate reading, writing and language and can be fun for teachers and students alike.

Goodman (1986) tells us that making a transition from basals to whole language can be done over time and at the teachers own pace. He also gives teachers a reason to put forth the effort and time:

Can school be fun? You bet! It not only can be, it should be. Learning in school should

be as easy and as much fun as it is outside of school. What's more, if kids are enthusiastic and enjoy learning then teaching is fun too! Whole language teachers admit they love teaching-- and what's wrong with that, even if pay isn't so great? Whole language teachers are proud professionals!

Let's not beat around the bush. Basal readers, workbooks, skills sequences, and practice materials that fragment the process are unacceptable to whole language teachers. Their presentation of language phenomena is unscientific, and they steal teachers' and learners' away from productive reading and writing. Many whole language teachers do not use basals at all, but build their programs around children's literature, often in thematic units. Some teachers salvage what they can - whatever good children's literature there is in their basals - to support the whole language program (p.25).

When concrete ideas are presented to teachers they are more likely to become enthusiastic about a program because it means less preparation time and more teaching time. With ideas presented in this project, teachers do not have to start a new program from scratch. The ideas presented will

help teachers feel comfortable with a literature-based program and will entice children to love the world of books and reading.

GOALS

A primary goal of this project is to provide a guide for teachers who want to move from basals to literature. This project will provide concrete ideas that can be taken back to the classroom for immediate use. Listed in the appendix are ten books with numerous ideas to use across the curriculum for a literature program.

A second goal is to provide children the opportunity to experience literature. If children learn to love literature and discover delight in books, they will be the ones who continue their love for reading. Many ideas are provided on how to set up a classroom that will create a strong reading environment.

Literature provides meaningful texts that children can relate to, develop understanding of others, and hopefully get children "hooked" on reading.

OBJECTIVES

Teachers will be able to:

1. Implement units provided in the appendix.
2. Integrate literature into other content areas.
3. Provide a variety of literary experiences for children.

Students will be able to:

1. Experience exposure to a variety of literature.
2. Recognize reading as a pleasurable experience.
3. Recognize the value of reading.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Much research is being done on the subject of teaching reading. Experts on the subject have similar ideas about the best method to use and yet disagree on some issues.

Learning to Read

Altwerger, Edelsky and Flores (1986) strongly agree that language is acquired through using it much the same way reading occurs. Goodman (1986) extends this idea by suggesting that reading and writing are learned most easily when whole, functional and meaningful. Goodman sees programs for teaching reading including three essentials:

1. There must be a lot of reading of whole, meaningful, relevant texts. Essentially, we learn to read by reading.
2. There must be an atmosphere in which risk taking is encouraged. In reading, risk taking involves trying to make sense out of texts even when you are not sure.
3. Both the reader and the teacher must focus on meaning, on the reader making sense of written language (p. 361).

Hall (1979) agrees that meaning should be the source of any learning. She sees reading as communication and good reading programs must include literature and recreational reading experiences.

Students today are "learning language skills" and not becoming "skilled language users" says Altwerger (1986). On the other hand, Woodward (1986) feels that many teachers view reading as an acquisition of skills.

Carbo (1987) suggests that any of a dozen methods of learning to read are "best" if it enables a child to learn to read with facility and enjoyment. Carbo feels that teachers need to test for individual reading styles to know what method would be best. She states that phonic instruction is best for auditory/analytic styles and that a whole language approach using literature is best for tactile/kinesthetic/global learners. Carbo sees the problem of literacy as one in which reading styles have been mismatched with the method of teaching.

No matter how the learning takes place, teacher ownership of a reading program is an important aspect in today's classroom. Teachers that do not feel supported by their administration most likely won't venture out and try new reading programs. Teachers need help in shifting to other methods, says Goodman (1986). Veatch (1986) feels that enthusiasm and commitment to a reading program are important. If administrators do not allow teachers a say in their program, enthusiasm may dwindle away.

Use of Basal Readers

Basal readers have dominated reading instruction for years. This may be the reason most writers address the basal reading program when discussing a change to a literature based program. When contemplating a change in method, a teacher often looks at the present program and evaluates its successes and weaknesses. Literature today suggests that many teachers are ready to break away from basals.

Goodman (1986) states an important problem with basals:

Throughout the history of education, text books have lagged behind the best knowledge in the fields they represent. Under the best of circumstances there is a delay in distilling and applying new knowledge in both content and methodology.

But the gap between the best knowledge in reading instruction and that represented in basal readers today is actually widening. Theory and research are moving in one direction and basals in another. In response to back-to-basics pressures and narrow test-teach-test methodologies, basals have become more trivialized, more atomistic, more arbitrarily sequential with less room for teacher judgement, less opportunity for pupil choice, less concern for making sense of real written language (p.358).

Veatch and Cooter (1986) noted that in a California case study done in schools that used basals entirely with no supplemental material, there was actually a decline in reading abilities. In other schools that emphasized all aspects of reading, including other instructional materials and supplemental reading materials, reading abilities increased.

Woodward and Veatch (1986) both agree that basals are too workbook oriented, full of check sheets, with little extended activities and too sequentially ordered. They feel this causes teachers to feel failure if their students are not doing well with all the skills on the check sheets. Veatch (1986) says "books don't teach, workbooks don't teach, teachers teach!" (p.365)

Although many disagree with the use of basals, others see a use for it in the classroom. Cassidy (1987) sees that an improvement has taken place in newer additions of basals and that a new method may not be necessary. The improvements include better teacher's manuals with more extended ideas, the quality of literature has improved and that workbooks have improved. Turner (1988) basically agrees with Cassidy but still sees a need for improvements in basals. He suggests that stories be geared to Newberry Award winners, that workbooks should encourage children to write responses and that teachers should supplement basals with literature

once a week. Both Cassidy and Turner agree that basals are time-savers for teachers and actually allow teachers to develop more creative extended lessons to go with stories.

Those educators and authors that agree with the basal approach to reading view it as a definite time-saver for teachers. They feel that teachers should use available materials instead of starting a new program and creating their own lessons. Many basal teacher's manuals use phonics, skills and some extended lessons to put together a total reading program including all models of teaching methods. Teachers become more of an eclectic teacher pulling from all resources.

Teaching Through Literature

A literature-based reading program is becoming increasingly popular in education today. The California State Department of Education has released grade level literature lists for teachers to use as a guide in their classrooms. Many teachers have already started using literature books for their entire reading program. Still others use basal readers and phonics as their method of teaching reading.

Most teachers will agree that the goal for teaching reading is that their students will learn to love reading and read in their leisure time. The ironic twist is that many teaching methods leave little time for students to

actually read. The literature-based program allows time for children to read daily, to read good stories with natural language and to read stories of interest to them.

Teachers that have used literature in the classroom for reading find it is successful because the student's attitudes about reading are positive. Through literature books children learn to relate and become a part of the literature, especially if teachers help students choose books of interest.

Although there may be disagreements about the methods of teaching reading there is one fact that Sullivan (1986) says teachers can't overlook. The whole language approach using good literature has a positive effect upon children's self-reliance and enthusiasm for learning to read.

Braze and Kristo (1986) feel that the whole language approach is a wonderful method and really the only method that should be used. Their concern is that most colleges today never expose their students to a whole language classroom. They see a need for students to learn from experiencing whole language in their college classes as well as seeing a school classroom using the approach. This kind of teaching is an art and must be modeled for and developed in college students becoming teachers.

Most experts that agree with a whole language approach see basal instruction as being too isolated.

They view basals as doing damage to reading success by slicing up reading into grade levels, equating reading with scores on tests, isolating skill sequences, simplifying texts by controlled vocabulary and by taking apart natural language through phonics instruction. Teachers who provide a literature-based curriculum want reading to be whole, sensible, interesting, relevant, purposeful and fun.

Goodman (1986) says the important issue for teaching reading is that students see relevance in reading and he tells us how this is achieved:

Authenticity is essential. Kids need to feel that what they are doing through language they have chosen to do because it is useful, or interesting, or fun for them. They need to own the processes they use: to feel that the activities are their own, not just school work or stuff to please the teacher. What they do ought to matter to them personally. Achieving the goal of providing for choice, ownership, and relevance throughout the curriculum is neither simple nor easy. But teachers must keep these goals in mind to ensure that the curriculum is most effective (p.31).

Most literature suggests that there is a definite move toward the use of literature in the classroom. Many teachers are putting basals in their place by choosing stories of interest and using many of the extended activities found in the basal manuals.

Literature-based programs allow learning to be a fun experience for both the learner and the teacher. It emphasizes success for students and teachers. Reading abilities will affect children the rest of their lives. Educators must realize that there is a great deal they can do to help children become better readers.

ADAPTATION TO OTHER GRADE LEVELS

A wonderful aspect about using literature in the classroom is that it can be used in K-12 classes. Good literature is available throughout the grade levels and lessons can be developed to meet the needs of the classroom and individual students.

When using literature with the very young, usually the teacher reads the story after background development has occurred. Then the story is extended into other content areas and activities or projects are made to help develop understanding of the story. Some teachers begin their reading program by letting these non-readers develop their own stories. The teacher writes as the student dictates the story. The teacher makes the stories into books and has each child illustrate their story. The children learn to read their own stories and then start reading their classmates stories too.

Once children are reading on their own, teachers can vary the method of literature use. Students can have their own copies and read the same book at the same time. The teacher can then do whole class lessons or cooperative learning group lessons. Another idea is to have an individualized program where older students who are readers can choose their own books to read throughout the year. To monitor choices the teacher can give book list ideas or suggest books according to individual personalities.

Many students enjoy the fact that they have a choice in the stories they read. This can help them feel successful in reading and help motivate them too.

Teachers will enjoy the fact that as they start developing lessons for literature books they can exchange ideas with other teachers and actually have a multitude of lesson ideas for several books. Since California is supporting literature in the classroom many book lists have been established and also many lessons have already been developed to go with stories. Teachers can then adapt these lessons to meet their classroom needs.

Although the ideas in this project deal with the primary grades, the concepts can be used at the secondary level also. Many of the arts and crafts, language arts and science ideas can be expanded upon and used at the secondary level. Some authors write young children's stories as well as young adult stories such as Judith Viorst who is listed in the appendix. Another idea for adaption to the secondary level is cross-age tutoring. Older students read a young children's book and come up with a lesson to present to a primary class. This would be beneficial for both age groups.

It is clear that literature can be used at every age level and that teachers can become a part of the reading program by developing creative lessons that meet the needs of the students.

MATERIALS

Most classrooms have their own libraries along with the school library. Often times the books in classroom libraries are books teachers have purchased, books donated by parents or books given by retiring teachers. A lot of times teachers purchase their favorite stories. These books most likely will be good starters for a literature program for two reasons. Teachers tend to choose favorite stories that are good stories with plots and natural language patterns. Secondly, teachers will be enthusiastic about the stories they have selected and therefore it will show in the presentation of the book and the extended activities.

The cost to the teacher should be minimal unless books are purchased for his/her own personal library collection. Since literature is a popular issue with schools today more funds could be allotted for the purchase of literature books. This way teachers can have a say in what books are purchased. Money spent on basals, spelling books and handwriting books could be spent on literature books instead.

Book companies have literature price lists. They vary in prices depending on paperback or hardback books. Teachers should start with a variety of stories so that the books will be of interest to all students.

Lots of recreational books are needed, fiction and non-fiction with a wide range of difficulty and interest.

Other than books, magazines, newspapers, directories, signs, posters and labels can be used in the classroom. These are not costly and can become a class project by having children bring them in from home.

Most materials needed for the extended activities are easily accessible to teachers. The materials are either in the classroom or available in the teacher's workroom.

The largest initial cost for school districts would be in forming a literature library for each individual classroom. Also good literature stories never go out of style and could save money for the district, whereas basal readers are purchased every year and are up for adoption every six years.

The copying of this project is the basic cost for the project. About five copies will be needed for the readers, the college and personal use.

Districts would be wise in supporting literature in the classrooms at all grade levels.

EVALUATION

The district that will be used for evaluation will be a K-8 district with a total enrollment of 2700 students. The population includes 30 percent Hispanic children, 3 percent Asian and Tongan children, 3 percent black children and 64 percent white children. The project will begin with a first grade class and eventually the entire district will be used in the study.

Implementation

Within a literature program a lot of writing, speaking, reading and creating take place. Teachers developing a literature program will see the progress of their students by keeping samples of their work. Keeping a portfolio of each student's work is a way to keep organized and aware of what the students are doing. The portfolio could have weekly writing samples which the teacher could evaluate by seeing progress make throughout the month. Journal writings could be kept in the portfolio also. Teachers can respond to journal writings as well as evaluating the student's writing progress.

Each student would be reading books that they find interesting. The teacher can set up a classroom environment where strong literature books are provided. Teachers can have one-to-one discussions on what the child has read. By selecting books of interest and delight to

them, students are more likely to enjoy their reading time and share their enthusiasm with their teacher during discussion time.

Goodman (1986) states:

Whole language teachers are not concerned with getting kids to behave in predetermined ways in a class or on tests. This will certainly differ from traditional classrooms. Students can always give right answers on tests for wrong reasons, and wrong answers for right reasons. Teachers can learn more about students by watching them. Informally teachers are constantly evaluating as the "kid-watch." Students don't show all their talents, abilities and strengths on a variety of tests given throughout the year. The key is that these things show up in the course of ongoing classroom activities. The best record for a teacher is watching, making anecdotal records, filing work throughout the year, giving Reading Miscues periodically and using a writing observation form (p.41).

When a problem is observed, whole language teachers will use strategy lessons to build on each student's weaknesses. Strategy lessons use literature texts with real language to help students learn a skill. Strategy lessons can be taught to a whole group, small groups or individually.

Teachers and administrators need to look at reading programs carefully. If they are looked at closely, educators will see that the programs need remediation much more than the students do!

Reporting Procedure

Reading grades are usually given according to what level the student is reading at in his/her basal reader. Some teachers give effort grades and then show if the student is reading below, at, or above grade level. These grades usually are based on basal reading programs.

Changes in reporting procedures would change with a literature-based program. A report card could have a column for literature/reading. In primary grades an effort grade could be given instead of an A,B,C grade. The problem with current reporting procedures is that oral reading is usually taken into consideration when determining reading grades but many students comprehend much more while silently reading. Also many students learn to hate workbooks and basal stories that have controlled vocabulary. Therefore, it may appear to the teacher that the student is a bad reader or just isn't trying, when in actuality the student may do quite well in a literature-based program. Teachers must realize that students read at different speeds. This does not mean that a student is a better reader or that they don't comprehend the story. If teachers want

readers in their classrooms they need to let students choose good literature to read, plan extended activities to make books come alive and let children read daily, not fill out workbooks and read one story a week.

Students like to know about their progress throughout the year. Teachers can use many ways to keep students posted on their progress other than report cards. Journals are a good way to interact with students one-to-one. Many students feel more comfortable writing to a teacher than actually talking to a teacher about their progress. Teachers can also use the journal as an effective tool to communicate with students. The teacher can also use weekly portfolios of the students' work to discuss the progress that is being made. Teachers can also give students a monthly letter to show strengths and ways to improve weaknesses.

Parents will definitely need to understand the change in grading and the use of literature. When parents are involved and informed about the changes going on in education they feel better about schools and teachers. Teachers need to remember that parents are lay people and teachers have to educate parents when changes within the classroom occur.

Teachers need to understand that children are emotionally affected by their grades. Attempts should be made to put less emphasis on grades and more attempts should be made to encourage students to have a love for reading and learning.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A literature-based program is not a cure-all for all reading problems. Each student is different and may react differently to a literature program than a basal program because that is all they may have known in school. Many students have been drilled their entire school life to memorize, transfer word for word from boards, create projects exactly like the teacher's sample and have not been allowed to use their creativity. It may then take some time for children to open up and develop their special talents and strengths. Teachers as well as administrators will need to be patient as a change occurs across the curriculum.

Although a literature-based program is a wonderful way to encourage the love of reading, a teacher is what makes a program work. Any teacher can read about a program, but implementing a program that works takes time, effort and evaluation on the part of the teacher. This project does not guarantee that teachers will love a literature program right away. Teachers must want to change and will need to spend time in doing so to make this program work for them and their students.

A literature program based on a whole language approach does not necessarily mean that there will be a quiet group of students reading silently. Teachers

need to learn that there is productive noise. A lot of times there is learning taking place and language development occurring. Administrators will have to learn to look for learning and interaction occurring, not for rows of children learning by rote.

This project is limited because it deals only with ten books that pertain to the primary age group. After ten weeks teachers would need to develop their own units based on books that they are familiar with and have chosen.

The whole language classroom may be run differently than a traditional classroom. This project does not allow you to see a whole language classroom in session. Teachers would have to go to classrooms and observe to get a feeling of how the classroom would be run. Every program will have its limitations but teachers make a program work!

MAJOR CURRICULUM MODEL

There are three basic models of reading that are being used in classrooms today. First, there is the phonics approach to reading which is the decoding model. Phonics teachers believe that students must break down the words into sounds to initially sound out the word or as they say "read the word." The second model is represented by the skills teacher. A skills oriented teacher teaches basic sight words to the students to get them started with words. Many of the basal readers use sight words in their beginning books so that the students can memorize the words in the stories. Many skills teachers use the basal reader and follow the teacher's manual which incorporates phonics, sight words and language development skills. The third model is the whole meaning or whole language approach to reading. These teachers are more concerned with children getting meaning out of the text, not just sounds or words. A whole language teacher is more concerned that children are reading good stories. Whole language learners focus on meaning and not on isolated skills. Learners are encouraged to use reading, writing and language in all their varieties. There is a no-risk learning environment.

A literature-based project would not fit into a phonics-based approach to reading. Phonics lessons ask the students to break up words to make sounds that do not have meaning. All the lessons in a literature-based program deal with whole stories and the meaning of the whole text.

Students do not interact with or react to a phonics sheet. They are told what to do on each sheet and they are taught that there is only one right answer to each question. Literature-based programs give the students freedom to learn, react and interact with a book and its characters. Students can then learn to love a character or become that character in their mind while reading. Phonics makes the stories become words, the words become sounds and the sounds have no meaning.

A skills approach to reading is mainly found when teachers use any basal series in the classroom. A typical basal lesson is to read the story, answer questions about the story, work with the teacher on skills and phonics at a group table or as a whole class and then do workbook pages corresponding to the story that was read. This sequence continues each day until the book and workbook are completed. The students then move on to the next book in the progression of the basal series.

A literature-based program would not work well with the skills approach for several reasons. The skills approach has students working in a workbook while they are at their seats. A literature program would have the students working on their own creative writing, reading a book or doing a creative activity as a group. The skills that are done in the workbooks do not necessarily teach reading but keep the student doing "busy work" at their seat. Whole language teachers feel workbooks rob students of their time to do creative writing and other projects. The whole language teacher would rather not use the basals but would use literature books and create thematic units around the book. A thematic unit provides a focal point for inquiry and language and also gets the students involved in their learning process. The students have choices and feel that they are special and their ideas relevant to what is being taught.

A literature-based program definitely lends itself to the whole language approach. Whole language teachers like to integrate stories into content areas. Literature lends itself to integration quite easily. For example, the book Ming Lo Moves The Mountain by Arnold Lobel can be used in many ways to extend the story. Language arts students could think of things that use to seem impossible for them to do,

like riding a bike. The students could compile a book of sentences and illustrations by filling in the statement, "_____ used to be impossible, but now it can be done." The story is also great to use around the Chinese New Year to delve into the Chinese culture. The students could learn the dance that they suggest in the book. Ideas could go on and on.

Another similarity between this model and the literature-based curriculum in the classroom is that choice, ownership and relevance are important to both. Many teachers allow students to choose good literature stories that are of interest to them. This way students feel as if they are reading something they wanted to and not because they were told to.

Speaking, listening, writing and reading can all be incorporated into the literature program. They do not become single entities but flow together and seem natural to the reader and the teacher. All literature stories can provide a beautiful integration of these areas to make it a joy for the reader.

Whole language teachers enjoy the use of themes within the curriculum. Thematic units are easy to create when using good literature. Many books have several themes in them that a teacher can use to suit the needs of the classroom. Teachers can also

choose a theme of the month like "Pig Mania."

Feature a book about pigs each day, do studies about farm life, make paper mache piggy banks or paper plate pigs, play pigmania, have a hog calling contest.

Books could be available for the students to read throughout the week such as, Charlotte's Web, Three Little Pigs, Pigs in Hiding and A Treeful of Pigs.

The whole language classroom would be quite different from a phonics or skills based classroom as Goodman (1986) points out:

The splendid organization of whole language classrooms is not always apparent to a casual observer. The kids and teacher plan together what they will do, when they will do it and how. Just listen for the buzz of activity, see the level of participation of kids and teacher, enjoy the sense of well-being and ease everyone exhibits and admire the relatively smooth transitions. The whole language teacher is clearly in charge, but it may take a visitor a few minutes to locate the busy adult doing many things in many parts of the room (p.31).

Both the whole language curriculum and a literature-based program provide a literate environment for students. Teachers will feel success when they see how the program can work.

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APPENDIX

Many teachers would like to try a literature-based program but don't know where to begin. Teachers are asked by administrators to teach a lot of subjects and teachers feel overwhelmed with all that is asked of them. Literature provides a way to incorporate subjects across the curriculum. This way teachers can feel confident that they are addressing all subject areas. Using literature in the classroom lends itself to reading good stories full of real language, while incorporating art, music, writing, science, math and social studies with the story.

The ideas presented in the appendix will help get a literature program started in the primary grades. These ideas can be adapted to other stories and grade levels. Stories can be added and deleted as teachers explore the many books available. There are so many wonderful stories that it is impossible to use all the literature available. It is better to start with a framework and expand and grow as time passes.

The easiest way to start a program is to design thematic units based on books. Teachers can look at areas in the curriculum and see where stories will fall in place with other subject areas.

With good literature books there are many ways to extend the story. Children definitely need to have some background knowledge or some form of reference with stories before they are read. Teachers can ask questions to build the child's interest in the story or teachers can dress up as a character in the story to motivate the students to read.

After reading the story, questions should be asked that encourage the children to give their opinions. Let the students choose a character in the book and tell how they would feel as that character.

Also, teachers need to think of literature in terms of other curricular areas, such as, Could I cook with the children?, What art projects could we do?, Are there math problems I could create?, Is there a social issue we can discuss? There are many ways to extend a story.

In the following section books are used with themes in mind. Resource materials such as, Beyond the Basal, Bridges, as well as fellow teachers have helped in compiling this group of lessons. Be creative and think of ways to use your favorite stories!

Miss Nelson is Missing

by Harry Allard

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- Show cover of book and have children predict who Miss Nelson is and why she is missing. Record predictions and refer back to them after the story.
- Ask children what they do when their parents are away and they have a babysitter. Do orally or as a writing activity.
- Questions to ask after the story - Which events in the story could really happen? Why might teachers be absent from school? Would you report your teacher missing if she/he didn't come to school?
- Make a class book about things the students like to do in school.
- Write differences and similarities about Miss Nelson and Miss Swamp.
- Make a book entitled "Miss Nelson Where Are You?" Have children draw their ideas about where she could be.
- Write acrostic poetry about the two characters.

ART:

- Have children create missing person posters for Miss Nelson or Miss Viola Swamp.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

- In the story the state of Texas is shown on a map. Use this time to learn about your state flag, bird and flower.
- Plan a field trip to the Police Station. Let the children ask the police questions and be finger printed.
- Use this time to create class rules and discuss the idea of a substitute teacher and the way the class should behave.

THEMES:

- Back to school
- Behavior in school
- Behavior when substitute teachers come to school

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MOON

by Frank Asch

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- Make a flannel board story using the tree, hat, bear, and moon.
- Celebrate Bear's birthday. Bring a bear to school. Serve "moon" (sugar) cookies. Sing Happy Birthday. Make a birthday bulletin board with birthday cake centerpieces.
- Choral reading. Have parts for the bear, narrator and the moon.
- Questions to ask - What might have happened to the hat after it was lost? Draw a picture and a story. What present would you give the bear and the moon? Why?

ART:

- Make a simple stick puppet. Use them to retell the story.
- Make bear bookmarks.
- Make bear pancakes.

SCIENCE:

- What makes an echo? (Raintree Encyclopedia of Science has a simple explanation.)

GAMES:

- Echo Game - Students can use puppets for this. One student gives a sentence, other students must repeat the sentence. (Sentences can be silly.)

THEMES:

- Bears
- Birthdays
- Friends

THE LITTLE HOUSE

by Virginia Lee Burton

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- Tell how the Little House felt as she watched the city develop around her, and how she felt when she moved back to the country.
- Read books such as Nothing Ever Happens on My Block by Ellen Raskin and Katy and the Big Snow by Virginia Lee Burton.

ART:

- Make a city or country community, using different sized boxes for buildings.
- Make a diorama in a shoe box depicting scenes from The Little House.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

- Draw or cut out pictures of different houses and classify them.
- Make a chart comparing and contrasting city and country life.
- Discuss trolley cars and areas that still use them. Find the areas on a map.
- Discuss the equipment and skills needed to move the Little House back to the country.

SCIENCE:

- Discuss the air and noise pollution mentioned in the book. What caused the pollution? How could it have been prevented? Discuss graffiti and litter and how to prevent them.
- Follow the phases of the moon for a month, as the Little House did.
- Create a bulletin board display of animals that live in the city and in the country.
- Make a calendar showing the Little House and the seasonal changes.

THEMES:

- Pollution
- City and country

STREGA NONA

by Tomie De Paola

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- Questions to ask - Has anyone in your family cooked too much of a particular food? Discuss what happened. Is Strega Nona a bad witch? Have children categorize good and bad witches from stories they already know. Do you think this story takes place now or a long time ago? Why? What jobs did Big Anthony do? What jobs do you do in your home? If you had a magic pot what would you ask it to cook? Have you ever done something when you were told not to? What happened to you?
- Discuss different ethnic foods. Put them in categories on the board.
- Show children pictures of the town square. Explain that people would gather there for functions.
- Have the children write their ideas about what they would have done with the extra pasta.
- Have students write a recipe using a large amount of pasta.
- Have students write a chant for a jump rope game.
- Have students create an ad or sign of their own. They could be asking for a helper.

ART:

- Have students draw a simple object. Glue colored pasta onto the object.
- Have students make necklaces out of pasta.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

- Make a simple map of Italy. Have children locate Calabria and have them color the map. Find Italy on a world map.

MATH:

- Use pasta as a math lesson. Compare and contrast cooked and uncooked pasta. Talk about mass, weight etc. Make spaghetti in class.

THEMES:

- Magic
- Not following orders

DANDELION

by Don Freeman

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- After a cool day have a "Come as you are" party after recess. Ask the students why they didn't take off their jackets. Talk about what you would wear to a "Come as you are" party - at night, after swimming etc.
- Questions to ask - How do you feel when you dress up? Do people treat you differently? Have you ever had a haircut you didn't like? What did you do? Do the animals in this story act like those in real life?
- Have children make a feeling book. Get them started with "I feel _____ when _____."
- Make an "All About Me" book to help students realize that they are special. Each day work on a different area, attributes, feelings, families, etc. Use them during Open House.
- Pin an animal to the back of each child. Have the children guess who they are by writing yes or no questions about their animal.

ART:

- Have children draw all the different types of feelings the lion had in the story.
- Make paper plate animal masks.
- Provide basic animal shapes for children to trace, cut and sponge paint.

MUSIC:

- Have children sing and act out this song to the tune of "Here we go round the mulberry bush." This is the way I wash my hands...This is the way I wash my face.

THEMES:

- Being yourself
- Self-esteem
- Grooming habits

OX-CART MAN

by Donald Hall

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- Read poetry such as "The Purple Cow" by Gelett Burgess, "The Lamb" by William Blake and "The Cat and the Moon" by William Butler Yeats.

ART:

- Dress paper dolls in modern and old-fashioned clothes.
- Do embroidery, cross-stitch, and other crafts.
- Learn about block printing and woodcuts.
- Make apple dolls or corn husk dolls.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

- Create a bulletin board showing how travel has changed. Draw pictures of early American modes of transportation and cut out magazine pictures of modern ones. Design a vehicle of the future.
- Research farm life, farm buildings, farm animals etc.

SCIENCE:

- Talk about how simple manufacturing processes have changed.
- Make apple butter or applesauce.

MATH:

- Designate one corner of the classroom as a "country store" and another as a modern store. Price items, then use play money to shop at both stores. Compare prices and merchandise and how the merchandise is sold.

THEMES:

- Farm life
- The old days

THE SNOWY DAY

by Ezra Jack Keats

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- Locate where the students live on a map. Ask them if it snows where they live. Point out areas where there is snow.
- Have children brainstorm ideas about what they could do in the snow.
- Show the students the cover of the book. Have them predict what the story will be about on a tape recorder.
- Questions to ask - Did Peter do anything in the snow that you have never done? Have you ever put a snowball in your pocket? What happened and why? How did you know that Peter liked the snow? What type of home did Peter live in? Discuss homes that the students live in and differences among them.
- Have students write a story about the most fun they could have on a snowy day. Have them illustrate their story.
- Have students write a story about what Peter and his friend would do if it were a sunny day.

ART:

- Have children make a scene from The Snowy Day. Let them look at the illustrations in the book and use fabric scraps, wallpaper, straws, toothpicks etc. to make the picture.
- Make snowflakes.
- Make snow pictures by gluing styrafoam pieces to blue or black paper.
- Make weather charts for a month and chart the weather by drawing pictures of the sun, clouds, rain, wind, etc.

SCIENCE:

- Collect some rain water. Put it in a freezer and see what happens. Weigh the ice and then let it melt. Weigh after melted.

THEMES:

- Winter
- Snow

THERE'S A NIGHTMARE IN MY CLOSET

by Mercer Mayer

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- Make a semantic web about nightmares to help students categorize their thoughts.
- Chart the differences between nightmares and dreams. Have the children illustrate a nightmare and a dream.
- Questions to ask - How did the boy feel about the nightmare in the beginning? In what ways did the nightmare act like a real person? How did you feel at the end of the story? What do you think happened when the boy and the nightmare fell asleep?
- Have children write to nightmares of their own.
- Have students make a list of rules nightmares should follow in a house during the day and night.

ART:

- Using clay, have the students create a monster of their own.
- Have students make stuffed animal monsters. Students can measure and weigh their monsters. Name the monsters.

THEMES:

- Afraid of the dark
- Halloween

MAKE WAY FOR DUCKLINGS

by Robert McCloskey

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- Questions to ask - What must you do to cross the street safely? When was there a time you tried to do something by yourself but needed help? What did Mrs. Mallard teach her ducklings? Why? How can the Mallard family be compared to a human family? How did the police officer and Mr. and Mrs. Mallard become friends?
- Have the children write about a zoo trip. Have them name their favorite zoo animal, what would they eat?
- Discuss the differences between a tame animal and a wild animal.
- Have a class pet day. Have the children share the pet's behavior, eating habits, sleeping habits and tell what they do to keep care of them.

ART:

- Make duck mobiles and hang them from the ceiling.
- Make ducks out of salt and flour dough.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

- Draw maps showing how to get to school and home.
- Have a police officer as a guest speaker.

SCIENCE:

- Have children bring in pictures of ducks and mallard decoys. Have the children find out what they can about ducks, where they live?, how they have babies?

MATH:

- Have a set of duck shaped ordinal number cards. Have children line up in an ordinal line.

THEMES:

- Safety
- Migration
- Homes

ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE
NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY

by Judith Viorst

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- Start telling the students about a time when everything went wrong for you. Write a language experience story using the students' sentences about their bad days.
- Show the book and discuss Alexander's expression.
- Questions to ask - What do you think was the worst thing that happened to Alexander? Why? Why do you think Alexander always said he was going to Australia? Would you like Alexander as a friend? Why or Why not? How old do you think Alexander is? Do you think it's hard to be the youngest in the family?
- Make a class list of adjectives describing types of days you can have.
- Have an advice box and let children anonymously put their problems in the box. Let children give each other advice about problems.
- Have students write about the world they would live in if they had the power to do anything they wanted.
- Write about visiting a parent's work place. Have parents come and talk about their jobs.

ART:

- Have children make invisible pictures like Alexander said he did. This can be done two ways - Draw a picture with white crayon and brush over the picture with water colors. Make a picture with lemon juice and a paint brush. After it dries press the picture with an iron.
- Have children design their own pajamas on construction paper. Use sponges or potato halves and tempera paint.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

- Share books about Australia. Find it on a globe. Discuss differences between where they live and Australia.

THEMES:

- Bad days in our life

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