

California State University, San Bernardino

CSUSB ScholarWorks

Theses Digitization Project

John M. Pfau Library

1992

Integrating literature across the first grade curriculum through thematic units

Diana Gomez-Schardein

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project>



Part of the [Education Commons](#), and the [Reading and Language Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gomez-Schardein, Diana, "Integrating literature across the first grade curriculum through thematic units" (1992). *Theses Digitization Project*. 710.

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project/710>

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the John M. Pfau Library at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Digitization Project by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

California State University

San Bernardino

**INTEGRATING LITERATURE ACROSS THE FIRST
GRADE CURRICULUM THROUGH THEMATIC UNITS**

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

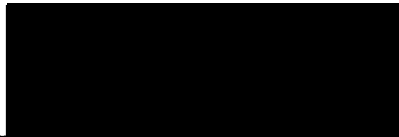
By

Diana Gomez-Schardein, M.A.

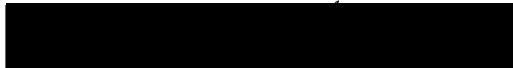
San Bernardino, California

1992

APPROVED BY :



Advisor : Dr. Adria Klein



Second Reader : Mr. Joe Gray

SUMMARY

Illiteracy is one of the nation's eminent problems. Ongoing controversy exists among educators as to how to best combat this problem of growing proportion. The past practice has been to teach language and reading in a piecemeal, fragmented manner. Research indicates, however, curriculum presented as a meaningful whole is more apt to facilitate learning.

The explosion of marvelous literature for children and adolescents provides teachers with the materials necessary for authentic reading programs. One way to use literature across the curriculum is through the use of thematic units. A curriculum featuring a thematic approach will encourage children to relate their own schemas to the literature and provide a framework for the children to experience and explore related ideas in a variety of subject areas.

Literature provides a natural context for literacy learning. Quality children's literature, including multicultural texts, can be the link to create an integrated curriculum which connects the subject areas of science, math, social studies, art, drama, music, and physical education and encourages students' use of the processes of language: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

This project is founded on the whole language or transformational theoretical model of reading instruction. The central premise is that children are born as language learners and classrooms are communities of learners. The units of study are literature-based and follow the Into, Through, and Beyond format as outlined in the English-Language Arts Framework (1987). The activities involve students in working independently, in small groups, and as a whole class in using literature to explore theme related ideas and concepts.

The purpose of this project is to facilitate children's learning

of the processes of reading, writing, listening, and speaking through literature-based thematic units. Literature-based thematic units are an effective means of integrating literature across the curriculum, promoting intellectual growth in children, and encouraging them to become lifelong readers and productive members of society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This writer would like to thank the following people for their support and encouragement during my Master of Arts program :

My parents, for stressing the importance of education and supporting me through my schooling years. I deeply appreciate their love and encouragement through a rough transition period in my life.

My husband, Rod, deserves a special award for his emotional support, for keeping me functional on the computer and for claiming he did not mind accompanying me on my endless trips to the library.

My professors at California State University at San Bernardino especially Dr. Adria Klein and Mr. Joe Gray for their expertise in the field of reading and for having confidence in my professional ability.

My colleagues at Colton Joint Unified School District for their ideas, encouragement and support.

Dedicated with love to my father,

Dr. Luis S. Gomez,

whose love, support and guidance

have made this project

a reality.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY.....	iii
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	1
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
GOALS AND LIMITATIONS.....	32
EVALUATION.....	35
REFERENCES.....	40
APPENDICES.....	46
OVERVIEW.....	47
APPENDIX A: SPIDERS.....	49
SPIDER UNIT BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	81
APPENDIX B: AFRICAN FOLKLORE.....	83
AFRICAN FOLKLORE UNIT BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	107
APPENDIX C: ELEPHANTS.....	109
ELEPHANT UNIT BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	132

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The current goals of the state of California's educational reform movement are to prepare all students to function as informed and effective citizens of society, to function effectively in the workplace, and to realize personal fulfillment (English-Language Arts Framework , 1987). Reading, the ability to obtain meaning from the text an author has written, is the cornerstone for a child's success in school and, indeed, throughout life. Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfillment and job success inevitably will be lost.

It has been said that students learn to read despite the method used to instruct them and that most students will learn to read with some degree of success. "All methods of teaching reading can achieve some success, with some children, some of the time" (Smith, 1985, p.5). However, the number of Americans who cannot read and write proficiently is growing at a tremendous rate. The schools are currently turning out functional literates, children who can read and write in school, but who do not necessarily read and write in other contexts. It is unfortunate that many individuals never acquire genuine literacy or the ability to use reading, writing, thinking, and speaking daily in the real world, with options, appreciation, and meaningful purposes in various settings and with other people (Routman, 1988).

According to Goodman, Shannon, Freeman, and Murphy (1988), there are three major views concerning language learning. The first is that language is habitual behavior which is learned through responses to environmental stimuli, the second is that human beings are born with an innate language competence which is then particularized in contact with the language of the family and community, and the third that it is a personal-social invention

internalized by children as they transact with family and other members of the language community. Unfortunately, the basal readers, the backbone of reading instruction today, represent the view of language as habit, the same view that was broadly accepted by the psychologists of the 1920's who helped shape the early basals.

Goodman, Shannon, Freeman and Murphy (1988) write, "...the central premise of the basal reader is that a sequential, all-inclusive set of instructional materials can teach all children to read regardless..." (p.1). In reality, the reliance on the basals as the sole source of reading instruction has done little to improve the literacy level of our students.

The basals are built around control. "They control reading; they control language; they control learners; they control teachers..." (Goodman, Shannon, Freeman & Murphy, 1988, p. 125). Research suggests this type of control is not necessary and is in effect counterproductive. Reading experts today believe that children learn to read "the same way they learn oral language, by using it in authentic literacy events that meet their needs" (Goodman, 1986, p.24).

Learners require the freedom to experiment, to take risks, to ask questions in the process of trying to make sense of comprehensible written language. Nowhere in the basals are learners encouraged to decide for themselves, what is a good story or text. There is little choice, little self control, minimal sense of ownership of their own learning and their own reading. This is not only unhealthy for their reading development, it is also detrimental to their development as thinkers, as learners, as participants in a democratic society.

It must be remembered that although the reading approach or method is a key element in reading achievement and promoting a lifelong interest in reading, there is not one approach that is

distinctively better in all situations or with all students. As a matter of fact the individual teacher plays a major role, the key component being the teacher's theoretical orientation.

Theoretical Foundation

According to Harste and Burke (1988), there are three major theoretical models that exist within the field of reading instruction that when put together form a continuum. On one side of the continuum there is the decoding model. The decoding or phonics approach to reading instruction is based on the assumption that learning to read is the acquisition of discrete letter/sound relationships. Language is learned from part to whole by building from the smallest to the largest unit. This model consists of teaching students phonetic rules that they can then apply to unknown words in order to decode and understand them. For students who struggle with the sound/symbol relationships and who are exposed to this model alone, learning to read then becomes laborious and unenjoyable.

At the center of the reading theories continuum lies the skills model. Those who teach according to this model also uphold that language is learned from part to whole, but also believe that reading is a system of three discrete skills: decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension. Reading is thus a hierarchy of skills. A reader must know all three components in order for reading to take place. Instruction within this model consists of students reading stories containing controlled vocabulary (such as that found in most basal readers) and of completing repetitious, often meaningless, worksheets.

On the other end of the reading continuum lies the whole language or holistic model. In this model, reading is believed to be a process of four interrelated cuing systems: graphophonemic (sound/symbol), syntactic (grammar), semantic (meaning), and

pragmatic (rules for learning language). Meaning is constructed from the reader's background and the author's background. Thus, meaning, rather than a group of discreet skills, is the base of reading. Proponents of this model of reading instruction believe that children learn to read by learning how to combine all four cuing systems in order to obtain meaning from print. In a whole language curriculum model, students learn strategies that demonstrate how they can predict, confirm, self-correct, and integrate knowledge in order to enhance their comprehension. The whole language model is based on the perspective that language is learned naturally as a process of communication.

Unfortunately, the term whole language and the whole language philosophy has been greatly misunderstood. According to Smith (1992), the whole language philosophy has "...been exploited by many publishers, distorted by teachers who do not understand it, and misused by administrators incapable of modifying their organizational systems or theoretical mindsets" (p.440). Therefore, for the purpose of this project, the whole language theoretical model will henceforth be referred to as the transformational model of reading.

The transformational model is not a recipe for teaching, rather it is a philosophy about language and learning, a way of thinking about children as language learners and about classrooms as communities of learners. Smith (1992) maintains that the basis of the philosophy is respect, both for language (which should be natural and "authentic," not contrived and fragmented) and respect for learners (who should be engaged in meaningful and productive activities, not in pointless drills and rote memorization). In transformational classrooms, children are given diverse opportunities to use language to make sense of the world and of written language.

Oftentimes young children approach their learning environment bringing with them feelings of failure due to past experiences. The transformational approach to teaching offers educators an opportunity to help their students realize that they are already successful at using language and that reading and writing are just other ways they can use this language to communicate with others.

Instruction based upon the transformational theoretical model builds upon a child's strengths instead of concentrating on deficits. This is why transformational teaching is of such vital importance for students from all walks of life as well as for students with special needs or for second language learners. In transformational classrooms, it is the relationships that exist within the classroom that are of prime importance: "...students' relationships with teachers and with each other and their relationships with what they are supposed to be learning - with reading and writing" (Smith, 1992, p.440). Through this perspective, children feel successful and enjoy learning.

Transformational teachers believe that children learn to read by reading. Therefore, one of the basic necessities for children's learning is the availability of interesting material that makes sense to the learner (Butler and Clay, 1987). A valuable aspect of each child's desire to learn is the background of experiences brought to the classroom. Reading must be seen as necessary and interesting to the individual learner. In other words, "To learn to read children must see ways of employing reading to further their own aims and interests" (Smith, 1985, p.127). Quality children's literature, both fiction and nonfiction, is imperative as it builds on children's background and stimulates interest in books and creates a desire to read. Research has shown that those students who read the most, read the best (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson, 1985).

Since children learn more easily and more readily when

language is meaningful, literacy experiences must be kept whole. Goodman (1986) cites the need for an integrated language arts curriculum with literature as the foundation. He writes "keep language whole and involve children in using it functionally and purposefully to meet their own needs" (p.7). Every interaction with text should reinforce the notion that reading and writing are processes of constructing meaning. Quality children's literature can provide a pleasurable way of developing the various aspects of language learning. Experiences with literature will provide children with opportunities to discover the function of print and to become acquainted with the structure and nature of written language. "As children interact with narrative texts, they learn strategies to generate meaning, the essence of reading" (Moss, 1990, p.40).

In accordance with the idea that language needs to be meaningful, children need to see themselves reflected in the literature they read. The transformational model emphasizes empowerment, through which both the teacher and the students have great input as to what will be learned and the materials and activities to be used. Most contemporary classrooms are multilingual in composition. Therefore, multi-cultural literature needs to be an integral part of the curriculum. "To capture the breadth of human experience, a strong literature program offers the language and literature of many nations and perspectives; of racially and ethnically and culturally diverse societies" (English Language Arts Framework, 1987, p.7).

The transformational model in which children learn to read, write, speak, and listen in a meaningful and natural context, usually through exposure to quality literature and their own writing experiences appears to best fit the state of California's (1987) English-Language Arts Framework guidelines which state that current English-Language Arts instruction needs to be revitalized

through a literature-based curriculum. This author realizes that the ideal is not easily attained. And yet, based upon daily classroom experiences working with children and teachers as well as on the work of notable educator-researchers, I believe it is important to begin making the curricular changes necessary to strive towards this goal. Integrating the curriculum through the use of literature-based thematic units is one way to take a step towards bringing teaching practices into greater consistency with the transformational model.

Literature can be the link to create an integrated curriculum which connects the subject areas of social studies, math, science, drama, music, art, and physical education and encourages students' use of the processes of language: reading, writing, listening and speaking. An interrelated curriculum will encourage children to make sense of their learning environment by connecting events and experiences from the literature to a common theme that carries across many different disciplines (Baskwill, 1988b; Moss, 1990).

The explosion of marvelous literature for children and adolescents has given us the materials for authentic reading programs. One way to use literature across the curriculum is through the use of thematic units. A curriculum featuring a thematic approach will encourage children to relate their own schemas to the literature and provide a framework for the children to experience and explore related ideas in a variety of subject areas. Well-designed thematic units provide multiple approaches to the topic. Students are encouraged to make connections between different disciplines or between the particular theme of study and their own lives. By changing the focus to a broader and more global type of instruction, the thematic units emphasize meaning and comprehension of the concepts rather than isolated facts and details. Through thematic units students are exposed to a variety of communication activities as well as to both print(fiction and nonfiction) and nonprint materials.

By exposing children to a particular concept through the different content areas, children are provided with the meaningful context necessary for retention and transfer of knowledge (Trachtenburg & Feruggia, 1989).

In this project, I propose to develop three thematic units for teachers using literature to integrate curriculum and demonstrate its positive and powerful effects with children. By integrating quality literature into the curriculum and introducing transformational strategies, transformational instruction as a philosophy rather than as a methodology will be illustrated.

These units are intended to provide teachers with strategies in the areas of language arts, social sciences, math, science, fine arts, and physical education that can readily be implemented in the classroom. This project will emphasize how reading and writing are interconnected and how children learn to read by writing. It will show how they write by reading and by participating in personally meaningful experiences.

My goal in developing these units is to help educators better understand the transformational philosophy and to feel more comfortable implementing transformational strategies into their own classrooms. In addition, it is hoped that those who read this manuscript will be encouraged to pursue acquiring further knowledge about the transformational theoretical model and the various resources that are available to assist them in making such a paradigm shift.

In order that students learn about and explore literature in various aspects of the curriculum, the thematic units in this project will utilize the Into, Through, and Beyond format as outlined in the English-Language Arts Framework (1987). For this project, the Into section will build upon the schema and background experiences of the readers by thinking, writing and talking about key ideas,

literacy experiences presented in these units will promote an appreciation for and enjoyment of literature in children and encourage them to become lifelong readers and ultimately to become productive members of society.

themes, and issues. The purpose of the Into section is to set the stage and arouse reader curiosity by exploring what the students already know about the topic at hand. It is hoped that the sharing of information will help to establish a common base of knowledge to provide a more meaningful experience when a piece of literature is read and when students make their own choices as to what literature they wish to read and activities they desire to pursue. The Through section includes the actual reading of the literature and a complete discussion of the story as the reading transpires. During the Beyond section, students reflect on what they learned, what they still have questions about, and what they want to know more about in a particular subject or area. Students are then provided with opportunities to apply their newly acquired knowledge. They are encouraged to participate in enriching reader response activities which focus on understanding and comprehending what was read. Activities in the Beyond section help students to clarify their thinking, realize new insights, and make these insights a part of their lives.

Literature provides a natural context for literacy learning. Quality literature stimulates and motivates a child's enjoyment of reading. Through books children gain an understanding of others as well as a better understanding of themselves. A Chinese proverb states, " a book is like a garden carried in the pocket" (Lundin, 1991, p.217). This proverb suggests how powerful books are as a means to intellectual growth. Literature transmits social values and America's multicultural heritage. "In children's books we preserve the wild rose, the song of the robin, the budding leaf" (Lundin, 1991, p.217).

The goal of this project is to integrate literature into all areas of a first grade curriculum so that children engage in the reading, writing, speaking and listening processes in all content areas and become actively involved in their learning. It is hoped that the

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Children attempt, from the moment they enter the world, to make sense of their environment. They develop individual theories of the world and constantly predict, hypothesize and test new theories in order to comprehend and learn more about their surroundings and make modifications of their current schema. According to Smith (1985), "children are born learning; if there is nothing to learn they are bored and their attention is distracted. We do not have to train children to learn, or even account for their learning; we have to avoid interfering with it" (p.8).

Smith (1985) believes that learning and comprehension cannot be separated. Therefore, curriculum presented as a meaningful whole is more apt to facilitate students' learning. By presenting an integrated language arts curriculum, instructors can assist students in making sense of the processes of thinking, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the English-Language Arts Framework (1987) meaning is also stressed. The framework states, "meaning is the first and most important reason for learning language and the primary focus of all language activities" (p.27).

Children know a great deal about reading and writing prior to entering school. They know many of the uses of written language, what people do with written language, have a rough idea of how written language works, and also have ideas about why people read, even before they can read themselves. Research shows that current reading instruction through basal textbooks is inconsistent with what children know about language and learning. Young children are junior members of what Smith (1985) refers to as the "Literacy Club." In order to facilitate and promote the admission of children into the "literacy club" it is important that children be provided with experiences that are meaningful and useful, and an environment in

which they can work collaboratively and feel free to express themselves without risk of criticism.

One of the goals of educators is to develop readers who are not only capable of reading, but who also enjoy reading and choose to read as a recreational activity as well as for educational purposes. To accomplish this goal, children require ample opportunities to read a variety of printed matter, especially good literature, rather than being subjected to contrived and non-authentic reading and writing experiences. While skills are important, "they must be taught in a context that encourages students to read and to love reading" (Cullinan, 1987, p.126).

A supportive environment in which children feel comfortable to take risks and test their theories of the world is essential to a quality program. Not only do language arts programs need to involve students in literature experiences in which they can experiment with both the oral (listening and speaking) and written aspects (reading and writing) of language (Routman, 1988) it is also vital that a quality program provide for cultural diversity. All students, regardless of nationality, ethnic group, or religion need to be provided the opportunity to experience positive psychosocial adjustment to life in this complex, multicultural society.

Through exposure to language that is presented in natural, whole, purposefully meaningful units and provided in a safe environment, children can become truly literate, active members of society.

In reviewing the literature on reading instruction, the following categories emerged as important subtopics: cultural diversity; the use of literature in the language arts program; the interrelationship of the language arts components (reading, writing, listening, and speaking); integrating the curriculum through language arts and thematic units.

Cultural Diversity

John Dewey believed that education is a necessity of life. He maintained that civilized society exists due to the transmission of education from generation to generation which occurs by means of communication of habits, activities, thoughts, and feelings from the older to the younger. Education renews people, enabling them to face daily problems encountered by their interaction with the environment. Without this transmission of knowledge and customs, society cannot survive. Therefore Dewey maintains that "education should not be looked upon as the mere acquisition of academic subject matter, but as a part of life itself" (Ozman and Craver, 1990, p.138)

It is essential for education to begin where the learner is, and from that point help the learner to expand. The individual child's needs are the focus of the educational experience. Dewey maintains that, "the school should be the place where the other environments that the child encounters-the family environment, the civic environment, the work environment, and others-are coordinated into a meaningful whole" (Ozman and Craver, 1990, p.138).

Since culture is the essence of the total existence of any human being, it is important that children sense that their culture is accepted and valued by others. Students of all backgrounds need to feel free in the school environment to express themselves in their native language and to share their cultural background with others. In order to capture the breadth of human experience, it is important to include the perspectives of racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse societies (English-Language Arts Framework , 1987).

Students enter the American public school system representing virtually every nationality, ethnic group, and religion of the world. Studies have shown that "the functioning of these students in the educational milieu is directly related to the degree of comfort they

experience when attempting to participate in classroom learning activities" (Lambert,1989, p.273). Lambert (1989) emphasizes the importance of psychological comfort as well as physical comfort and he stresses that psychological comfort is directly related to the perception of threat to one's "self". If students perceive that their culture is not accepted in a particular learning environment, their self-concept will be lowered thus creating an uncomfortable learning environment.

It is important for teaching professionals to accept all the ingredients of their students' cultures: language, diet, religion, family values, and social patterns. Language is one of the most important aspects of culture. It is the main form of a student's communication and each word spoken is related to feelings and attitudes. It is, therefore, crucial that a learner's primary language be respected. Just as teachers build upon the the prior experiences of English speaking students, so too, should the learnings of English as a second language students build on the educational and personal experiences they bring to school. "In language learning, students should be encouraged to use their previous experiences with oral and written language to develop their second language and to promote their growth to literacy" (Early, 1990, p.568). Social customs as well can affect the classroom learning process and it is important to remember that "the cultural background of some students has imbued them with ideas and understandings that are different, not wrong" (Lambert, 1989, p.274).

The ideal learning environment for students is one which responds to their needs, strengths, interests and ways of learning, and which develops their maximum capabilities as lifelong learners. There is a need for cultural pluralism which emphasizes the concern for the individual's development to its full potential rather than cultural conformity. Through exposure to multicultural literature,

students can identify with their own heritage and culture and explore the rich heritage of others thereby expanding their awareness and decreasing negative stereotypes of individuals from other cultures.

Role of Literature in the Language Arts Program

For many years, the focus of the teaching of reading in the public schools has been on teaching skills rather than content. The basis for this focus is presumed to be that once students have mastered certain literacy skills, they will be able to read and comprehend any text. Reading instruction has been undertaken primarily through the use of basal readers whose central premise "is that a sequential all-inclusive set of instructional materials can teach all children to read regardless of teacher competence and regardless of learner difference" (Goodman, Shannon, and Freeman, 1988, p.133). Fortunately, teachers are beginning to realize that basals are inconsistent with what children know about language and learning and that while generally successful in teaching children to read, the basals' focus on skill mastery has "not been nearly so successful in engendering an interest in reading or in conveying the idea that reading has some utility outside the classroom and workplace or that it might provide important substance throughout a lifetime" (Bishop, 1990, p.561).

Whenever language becomes a conscious object of study, it tends to become meaningless. Reading, like all the language processes, develops more easily in the context of its use. The learner needs freedom to take risks. Research shows that virtually all human babies learn their home language without formal instruction. Learning to read can occur just as easily as speech is mastered in a supportive environment. "All children . . . deserve to be immersed in the same kind of supportive environment at school that has served literacy growth in homes" (Roser, Hoffman, and Farest, 1990, p.554).

Literature forms the natural pathway to literacy. Literacy is the bridge to a child's world of learning. Original literature has proved to promote learning to read naturally. It is an "excellent vehicle for developing , enhancing, and enriching lifelong, active literacy" (Routman, 1988, p.18). Huck (1987) writes:

Literature is the imaginative shaping of life and thought into the forms and structures of language. The province of literature is the human condition; life with all its feelings, thoughts and insights. The experience of literature is always two dimensional, for it involves both the book and the reader.
(p.4)

Literature includes, but is not limited to: picture books, traditional stories such as folk tales, fables, myths, fantasy (fairy tales), science fiction, poetry, fiction, nonfiction, informational books, and biographies.

A literature-based language arts program provides students with numerous opportunities to learn to read naturally as well as to develop and increase all other aspects of their academic knowledge. Through exposure to literature and literature-centered activities, students experience learning in a natural manner which ultimately contributes to their overall concept of reading as a means of gaining understanding and furthering knowledge. In this way, learning becomes a pleasurable and often exciting experience rather than a tedious task.

Goodman (1986) believes whole and relevant texts support literacy development. Commonplace textbooks usually found in the classroom are uninteresting and unmotivating to children. Well-written stories accompanied by rich, detailed illustrations provide a more memorable, meaningful experience. These stories are often easier to comprehend and leave a lasting impression on the child's mind. If a story leaves an impression, it often provides a context to

which a student can refer at any point later in life. Images held in the memory bank which are suddenly pulled from reserve are "like pieces of a puzzle that fill in the gaps to form a more complete picture of knowledge and understanding" (Camarata, 1991, p. 191). Predictable materials that draw on concepts and experiences children have had, capture the attention of and motivate students. These meaning-laden texts instill in children a love of reading. As is already known, "if children love to read, they will read, and if they do read, they will become competent readers" (Cullinan, 1987, p. 42).

All individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion seek to establish a sense of personal identity and to gain an understanding of the world and their role in it. Smith (1985) believes that the human brain's main function is to organize background information and experience into a system or "a theory of the world" which is the basis of all perception and understanding (p.73). Each child enters school with a "theory" and seeks to make sense of the world by interpreting new events and incoming information with respect to this "theory". Quality literature can aid students in making sense of the world by educating their hearts as well as their minds. Literature helps children entertain new ideas, and develop new insights. "It can stretch the imagination, creating new experiences, and enriching old ones" (Huck, 1987, p.317).

Children's books provide students with a global perspective. When real life experiences are reflected in literature, students can develop "more positive attitudes not only toward themselves but also toward people from other countries" (Diakiw, 1990, p. 297). They can make connections and see the relationship between their own culture and that of others.

Multiethnic literature can be used as a tool to help students develop healthy self-concepts which stem from knowledge about and

pride in their family and educational backgrounds. "The use of multiethnic literature can also extend the knowledge base of individuals in parallel cultures by exposing them to the differences and similarities between their culture and that of other groups" (Walker-Dalhouse, 1992, p. 416). By exposing students to the varied works of writers from all over the world, they will be assisted in developing a lifelong interest and respect for the contributions that people from different cultures have made to America (Minderman, 1990). Camarata (1991) accurately sums up the benefits of multicultural literature in the following statement:

Not only do such titles help to acquaint children with the background and traditions of their friends and classmates, humanizing what may be strange or different; they also act as a sort of mirror for newly immigrated children, something in which to find a little of their own image, a connection to a new society that is now their own. (p.190)

Literature is a wonderful stimulus for reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Cullinan (1987) believes that students learn the "language of literacy" by reading and by hearing literature read aloud. Good literature is the mainstay of a beginning reading and writing program. This quality literature exposes students to new vocabulary, multiple meanings of words, a variety of story structures, themes, and authors' styles of writing (Routman, 1988). The information gained from children's literature is collected into each individual's "linguistic storehouse" for future reference and use. Bill Martin Jr. (cited in Butler and Turbill, 1984) expresses his idea in these terms:

Each of us has a linguistic storehouse into which we deposit patterns for stories and poems and sentences and words. These patterns enter through the ear (and the eye) and remain available throughout the course of a lifetime for reading and

writing and speaking. (p.16)

Exposure to quality literature is crucial to a child's development. Integrating literature across the curriculum is beneficial as learning is facilitated through personally meaningful listening, speaking, reading and writing experiences which promote understanding and growth in each child's "theory of the world".

Interrelationship of the Language Arts Components

For many years, educators believed that children about to start school knew very little about reading and writing. Hence, it was primarily the teacher's job to provide opportunities and experiences which will promote literacy learning. However, it can be contended that literacy skills begin to emerge at a much earlier age than had been believed. Many aspects of literacy behavior in the home relate to later literacy acquisition. Young children acquire language and social and academic skills developmentally. In a supportive home environment, they observe 'demonstrations', they are encouraged to participate actively, they try out or practice independently, and they gradually become competent and confident (Routman, 1988, p.17).

One of the greatest accomplishments of the young child is fluency in oral language. From the time they are born, children are encouraged by adults to learn oral language by looking past their errors to what they are attempting to say and by rewarding closer and closer approximations of conventional language. Oral language develops without formal instruction and because of the basic need to communicate and children's natural efforts to understand the world around them. Children desire to learn language in order to communicate and to make sense of their environment. According to Goodman (1986), "children are literally driven to learn language by their need to communicate" (p.15).

It is important for children to acquire the ability to read as naturally as possible. The natural acquisition of reading abilities is

one facet of the transformational theoretical model of reading. In the transformational approach, children learn to read, write, speak, and listen in a meaningful and natural context, usually through exposure to quality literature and their own literacy experiences. Goodman (1986) explains that rather than continue the past practices of breaking natural (whole) language down into small, abstract, manageable parts, the basis of the whole language or transformational philosophy is that children learn when language is meaningful. Therefore, literacy experiences must be kept whole. He writes, "keep language whole and involve children in using it functionally and purposefully to meet their own needs" (p.7).

The theory behind teaching young children to read is that the reading process closely parallels that of thinking and learning. Oral language and written language has not been treated as language but rather "as a kind of coded representation of speech" (Goodman, 1986, p.23). For this reason, it is widely believed that reading is learned differently than speaking. This is not the case. Children learn to read "the same way they learn oral language, by using it in authentic literacy events that meet their needs" (Goodman, 1986, p.24). Many children have had trouble learning written language because it is made hard to learn by isolating print from its functional use and teaching skills out of context.

In order to help young children to break into the code of written language, the cue can be taken from how babies learn to talk. "If we take our cue from how children learn oral language, then we will allow children to learn written language by using it, as best they can, for real purposes, and by having adults see through their errors to what they want to say" (Calkins, 1986, p.36). Error is not a pertinent issue when children are learning to talk. Instead, children's early oral language efforts are looked at as closer and closer approximations of adult language. Calkins (1986) writes that when a

baby says "ady" adults would not think of responding "On, no! He is saying Daddy incorrectly. He is clearly not ready for whole words yet, he needs to drill on the *d* sound" (p.36). It is imperative for adults to celebrate what the child can do rather than to concentrate on what is done incorrectly. Children ought to be given opportunities to learn written language by using it to the best of their abilities for personally meaningful purpose.

As children acquire spoken language before entering school, so, too, do they begin to acquire knowledge of written language. Oral and written language develop concurrently, each facilitating and supporting the other. Smith (1986) writes that "...children learn about print and about reading in the same way that they learn about spoken language, without obvious effort or the need for formal instruction" (p.136). Living in a literate society children are exposed to an abundance of print. They encounter print both in the home as well as in their outside environment. The wealth of meaningful print within the personal and pervasive world of children's lives serves to give children the opportunity to derive insights, generate ideas, and test hypothesis about written language while they retain the freedom to select and control what they most want to learn and what makes the most sense to them. Speaking, reading, and writing are used by children for a variety of purposes to express and communicate ideas and feelings (Pappas, Kiefer, Levstik, 1990).

Children strive to make sense of the world based upon their own experiences and acquired knowledge. Pappas, Kiefer and Levstik (1990) describe the young child as a constructive learner, an active meaning-maker. As social beings, children are continually learning. The information children gather through social interaction is constantly being changed or modified to fit their current schemata or individual mental representations of knowledge. Smith (1985)

refers to these schemata as a "theory of the world" which each individual holds in the head. This theory is the basis of all perception and logical understanding of the world. "...it is the root of all learning, the source of all hopes and fears, motives and expectations, reasoning and creativity" (p.73). Smith (1985) believes that all that is known about the world has come about by interpreting events in the world with respect to individual theories.

The transformational theoretical orientation holds that reading, writing, speaking, and listening are interdependent and interactive aspects of a single process (Harste, Short, and Burke, 1988). In this view, reading is always focused on meaning. Teachers who hold this theoretical orientation attempt to create, in their classrooms, as much as possible the same conditions for literacy acquisition that exist for language acquisition in the home. They expect children to learn to read and write just as easily and naturally as they learned to talk. They encourage involvement with real language used for real and meaningful purposes.

Research indicates that the knowledge of spoken language that children develop forms the basis for their knowledge of written language. "Oral and written language are two parallel language processes, different sets of language registers, which overlap to some extent" (Goodman, 1986, p.22). Through rhymes, songs, and stories told orally, children begin to understand that language serves many functions and can be used in various ways. They soon sense that language is entertaining and expressive and not simply a means of exchanging information. Through social interaction using oral language (speaking and listening) adults can orient children into the uses of written language. By reading literature aloud, adults can support and build upon the language strengths children have already developed.

Reading aloud strengthens all areas of language arts

(Trelease, 1989). Reading aloud to children helps build positive attitudes toward reading, exposes children to a variety of literature, and most importantly serves to incorporate all the language processes: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Through listening to stories read aloud, "...the child's imagination is stimulated, attention span stretched, listening comprehension improved, emotional development nurtured, the reading-writing connection established, and where they exist, negative attitudes reshaped to positive" (Trelease, 1989, p.16).

Strickland and Morrow (1989a) believe reading to children increases their interest in books and in learning to read. "Children who have been read to during their early years associate reading with pleasure and follow models of reading behavior" (p. 322). Quality literature, therefore, can be considered an important medium because "...more than television, more than film, more than art or overhead projectors-literature brings us closest to the human heart" (Trelease, 1989, p.13).

Using literature in the classroom is a viable means of promoting the development and integration of the language arts components of listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Integration is one way in which educators can make the transition from a skills-based approach to teaching reading from the transformational perspective.

Integrating the Curriculum through Language Arts

The ideal learning environment for both students and teachers is one which responds to individual needs, strengths, interests and ways of learning. "Human nature tells us two things. First, students work more diligently when they have a choice in their learning. Second, they are more motivated to work in areas that they value or in areas that hold their interest" (Round table, 1990, p. 75). Teachers who believe in empowering children have found that one

way of encouraging children to become actively involved in their learning is to stress the natural integration of subject matter and to provide instruction "within the context of purposeful, meaningful experiences" (Staab, 1991, p. 108).

According to Routman (1991), "integration, or integrated language arts, is an approach to learning and a way of thinking that respects the interrelationship of the language processes-reading, writing, speaking, and listening-as integral to meaningful teaching in any area" (p.276) It is important for integration to occur between the language arts processes as well as across the curriculum. This will benefit both teachers and students. As human beings, we are motivated to do a better job when we are engaged in activities of interest.

Stanek (1991) recommends thinking of integration in three steps which when combined form a total unit. Integrating the language arts links the teaching of listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills. Integrating the disciplines takes writing across the curriculum, connecting what the student knows or desires to learn about a particular subject to the study of literature. Most importantly, integrating the child's experience and the curriculum means that teachers will recognize that what children bring to the story is as important as the information the story itself contains.

Baskwill (1988b) believes that implementing an interrelated curriculum is one way teachers can capitalize on children's natural ability to make connections between knowledge gained from past experiences and what they observe and discover through new events and experiences. With language arts as the focal point, all aspects of a particular program can be bound together.

Brozo and Tomlinson (1986) contend that the use of children's literature in conjunction with content textbooks not only promotes students' interest and involvement but also increases learning.

Interesting literature motivates and maintains students' interest. Combining this literature with textbooks makes the content curriculum more comprehensible and memorable ultimately resulting in students' assimilating the information more easily into their schematas of the world.

Reed (1989) writes that good beginnings are important for young learners in the process of figuring out who they are, where they fit into the world, and how to make sense of their experience. Learning to think about things in an historical way is one way children can realize their personal potential. Teachers can use children's natural interest in stories to help children connect with history. (Hickman, 1990). There are many advantages to using storybooks to teach social studies concepts. Many children's books reflect basic concepts of the social sciences such as individual freedom, choice, and responsibility (Hennings, 1982). Quality literature emphasizes human drama and creates suspense that can draw children into remote times and places. These stories of the past provide a base on which children can build larger ideas about history-without being bored (Hickman, 1990).

Hennings (1982) holds that stories can help children understand and accept individual differences by presenting the idea that people possess unique qualities that make the world a better place to live . Diakiw (1990) also found children's literature to be a powerful medium for understanding the world. "Stories can be a powerful way to transport students to distant countries with cultures and traditions far removed from their own" (Diakiw, 1990, p.297). The growing volume of children's literature, especially those stories that make up a folk heritage or incorporate values that are part of the culture provide a meaningful exposure to history for young students and enable them to "...cherish and celebrate our similarities and our differences" (Diakiw, 1990, p.300).

Young children have a natural curiosity about math and yet, for many, math soon becomes a boring and often frustrating subject. Ohanian (1989) believes one way to stave off this boredom and anxiety is to help students to develop number sense-pattern, purpose, and pleasure in numbers. Since number sense is built on natural instincts, students are convinced that math makes sense. In order to assist students in discovering the value of math and understanding math concepts, teachers should begin with books. Burns (1987) writes that linking language and math gets kids thinking. And when that happens, even young children can become problem solvers.

Radebaugh (1981) writes that children can explore various math concepts while they enjoy picture and story books. Initially, children require concrete, hands-on experience with objects in order to acquire math concepts. Later, students advance from this concrete (manipulative) stage to the iconic (pictorial stage) in which slightly more abstract concepts are developed. Children's books lend themselves well to reinforcing and supplementing concrete experiences in math. Picture and storybooks provide colorful illustrations and repetitive phrases which "allows language and mathematics learning to grow together naturally and imaginatively" (Radebaugh, 1981, p. 906). Through these books, children can explore the concepts of shape, comparison of relative size, ordinal numbers, one-to-one number correspondence, and counting.

Math lays a solid foundation for the study of science. Sherman (1989) advocates that since mathematics is the language of science it is impossible to teach one without the other. By combining the teaching of math and science, students will learn that math lays a solid foundation for the study of science.

Smardo (1982) strongly supports the implementation of a science program for young children which combines hands-on exploration with vicarious experiences in books. In this way

children will be provided with a wealth of opportunities for science discovery. According to Smardo (1982) there are several scientific concepts which can be explored through literature including but not limited to animal changes, insects (changes and identification), light (rainbows and shadows), machines, magnets, tools, moon, plants and seeds (growing), time and seasons, weather, and water (evaporation, floating, melting).

However, while books are effective tools for providing interesting background material and for helping children relate science to their everyday lives, children's literature should not become a substitute for direct science experiences (Smardo, 1982).

Cunningham (1981) writes that story dramatization is a natural vehicle for improving speaking skills and listening/reading comprehension and fostering a love of stories. Miccinati and Phelps (1980) cite synchronized movement, pantomime and improvisation as examples of areas of drama that require the same language abilities and thinking skills fundamental to reading. "When children are able to act out stories which they have read, they are demonstrating that reading is something more than word calling. It allows them to make sense of their reading...something enjoyable...with meaning for them and for others" (Miccinati and Phelps, 1980, p. 270).

Classroom drama is an important motivator. Finding stories to dramatize becomes a purpose for reading. When the creativity of the child is let loose, learning becomes fun and reading becomes meaningful. In order to act out a story, students must be familiar with that story, they need to have heard it or read it themselves several times. When children want to read in order to have fun acting out, they develop strong positive feelings about reading. Altieri (1991) maintains that allowing children to become involved with favorite characters not only helps to develop empathy but also

promotes appreciation of literature at a higher level by internalizing characters' feelings.

Music is an integral part of children's lives. Harp (1988) suggests that "Music and reading go together because singing is a celebration of language" (p. 454). He holds that children's language naturally has rhythm and melody. It is this natural "music" of language that children bring with them to the task of learning to read. Combining music and good books brings books alive, thereby enhancing children's enjoyment of music and reading.

According to Lamme (1990), children's picture books with musical content provide an excellent resource through which children can learn to read and to enjoy reading. Jalongo and Bromley (1984) cite music and song picture books as motivators that will encourage children to confidently meet the challenge of speaking English as a second language. "Song picture books can motivate children to listen, speak, read, and write in ways that not only facilitate cognitive growth but also promote general linguistic competence" (Jalongo and Bromley, 1984, p. 844).

Music is a happy experience for most young children. It offers unique opportunities to effect cognitive development in many areas of instruction (McDonald, 1975). Songs provide children with "a vivid sense of drama and excitement through a kinetic dimension" (Cohen, 1974, p. 60). Through high involvement in predictable songs, students have the opportunity to acquire sight vocabulary, to develop positive feelings about reading, and to express themselves (Renegar, 1990). By providing vivid learning experiences, music becomes a potential tool for helping build successful readers.

Children can sometimes demonstrate their understanding of a piece of literature or a particular concept more clearly in art than in words. Using art as an enhancer of the reading program can provide the extra stimulation and motivation that many young readers need.

"Art provides an outlet for the creativity of the young child. By using their imagination and experiencing the 'hands on' approach children become intrinsically motivated to read" (O'Bruba, 1987, p. 174). Harp (1987) cites the following as reasons that art and reading belong together: Children enjoy art. After children have completed a piece of art they can be encouraged to write about it. When students write, they read. The regular availability of art facilitates the illustration process when children publish their own books. On a more practical level, Harp (1987) writes "...the heart of the relationship between art and reading seems to be motivation" (p. 347).

Integration is a key principle in both linguistic and cognitive development. Language, as well as curricular content, is learned best and easiest when it is whole and presented in a natural context. According to Goodman (1986), speaking, listening, writing, and reading develop more fully when developed in the context of the exploration of the world of things, events, ideas, and experiences. Using quality children's literature provides teachers with a tool to teach skills in context and allows for a child-centered curriculum. One approach to integrating literature throughout the curriculum is through the use of thematic units.

Thematic Teaching

Thematic units are units in which the entire or a large part of the curriculum is organized around certain topics or themes. According to Goodman (1986), "A unit provides a focal point for inquiry, for use of language, for cognitive development. It involves pupils in planning, and gives them choices of authentic, relevant activities within productive studies" (p. 31).

It is important to distinguish between correlation and integration when discussing thematic units. According to Routman (1991), activities clustered around a central focus or topic in which

there is little or no development of important ideas is correlation. With integration, on the other hand, the relationships among the disciplines or subject areas are meaningful and natural. Interdisciplinary connections across the different subject areas are not necessary for integration to be occurring. Rather, Butler (1990) states, "The only reason to include some other discipline is if it somehow extends and enriches the learning or is beneficial to the student" (as cited in Routman, 1991, p. 278).

According to Baskwill (1988), there are three vital ingredients to thematic units. Two of the criteria for a good theme are that it be rich in literature, both fiction and nonfiction, and that it have natural links to other areas of the curriculum. The third criterion is time. A theme requires time to unfold and develop naturally. "The excitement of an unusual theme can motivate students to read, write, and enliven school spirit" (DeZengremel, 1990, p.86).

Thematic units based on literature provide children an opportunity to explore a variety of writing styles, structures, and formats (Baskwill, 1988). According to Routman (1988), tales can be read and discussed for storyline (literal level), discussed for universal moral (interpretive level), and applied to a student's personal life situation (evaluation, critical level). Through exposure and interaction with quality literature, students become motivated to use knowledge gained and apply it to other literature pieces.

Student interest and choice is a crucial factor in theme development. DeZengremel (1990) recommends that teachers set a purpose for theme development by having students complete a type of "K-W-L- activity with columns labeled 'What I Think I Know' and 'What I Want to Know.' A separate sheet titled 'What I Learned' will be used during the unit to document literary learning" (p. 86). Harste, Short, and Burke (1988) have termed the "K-W-L" activity a Theme Cycle. In Theme Cycles, the students as

"informants" use their own knowledge and experiences with learning and life to negotiate themes. The curriculum that results is a collaboration of the teacher and the students. Through student choice and participation, the teacher becomes a facilitator of learning and children become competent, independent, active learners. "The children become teachers of each other. They develop confidence in themselves as both teachers and learners" (Lamme and Lee, 1990, p.296).

Conclusion

Individuals in the educational field often mistakenly assume that good teaching is a matter of knowing the research and putting the theory into practice. But for research and theory to be meaningful, it is important that teachers be able to relate the findings to what they know about their students' language and ways of learning.

Smith (1992) reminds educators that no matter how understanding and collaborative they are, not all children will learn what they are expected to learn when they are expected to learn it. As children are individuals, with individual needs, desires, and learning styles it is important they be treated as such.

Integrating the curriculum through the use of literature-based thematic units is one way to take a step towards bringing teaching practices into greater consistency with the transformational model in which the child is at the center of the curriculum and learning. By utilizing thematic units, teachers can begin with what the child knows and gradually move the child into new realms of knowing. Although teaching from the transformational perspective is tremendously challenging, it is well worth the effort to, in every way possible, create an environment in which children are safe to take the risks necessary for learning.

GOALS AND LIMITATIONS

The goal of this project is to implement thematic units to help students improve linguistic development and foster enthusiasm and a growing love of reading on their own. The project's intent is to motivate and actively engage children in reading and associated language arts activities through literature-based thematic units. Quality literature provides children with meaningful encounters with print, fosters curiosity and excitement, and facilitates the growth of students' maximum capabilities as lifelong readers and learners.

Children are individuals. They have various likes, dislikes, interests and ways of learning. The instructional goal is to incorporate a variety of written materials and learning experiences so that every child is free to choose materials and activities of interest.

The integration of language arts, fine arts, math, physical education, science, and social studies with literature as the foundation has the goal of serving to promote interest and competence in literate activities. Students will be encouraged to explore literature as they delve into each theme. Fictional and non-fictional materials, including texts that reflect multicultural perspectives, as well as poetry, songs, and audio-visual materials will be incorporated into the thematic units.

There are two major limitations to the implementation of this project. An abundance of literary materials is required. However, due to the budgetary cutbacks currently being experienced by school districts statewide, funding for supplemental classroom or literary materials is virtually non-existent. Teachers will be hard pressed to gather resources, but with determination it can be accomplished. Some possible options include borrowing books and materials from co-workers or from the local public library, which restricts patrons to a limited number of books for a specified period with some

renewal options. Although a multitude of items can be borrowed from other teachers or from the library, sometimes several copies of a particular book, particularly a current or popular selection, are desired. This often leads a teacher to a final option: that of using personal funds to obtain literary materials for the classroom.

Another limitation is the need for audiovisual equipment. Professionally-recorded or teacher-prepared, taped versions of stories are often desired by children who enjoy listening to stories read aloud. A listening center, including a tape player and headsets is a one-time purchase. Yet, additional audio cassettes are continuously required and can become prohibitively expensive. A video camera and taping equipment (tripod and videotapes) for videotaping students involved in cooperative projects in order to document learning and interest will also be needed. Oftentimes school districts have such equipment available for use at each school site. However, these items must be shared among colleagues and are not available for a long-term basis. Teachers can occasionally write grants to fund the purchase of taping equipment for special projects, but this is not always a viable option to the obtaining of funds. And, once again, teachers may opt to personally finance this venture.

In order for the implementation of literature-based, thematic units to be successful, it is vital that the classroom environment accommodate a variety of learning styles and be conducive to risk-taking ventures. It is also imperative for students and teachers to work together and be willing to share ideas, thoughts, and feelings about the literary experiences and learning activities.

According to Smith (1992), the relationship that exists within the classroom between students and teachers and among students is of prime importance. He holds that respect is the basis for this relationship. Students and teachers require a respect for "authentic" and natural language and for themselves as learners. Thematic units

which integrate literature and learning across the content areas can be viewed as a viable means of introducing children to the world of literature and of promoting their desire to seek knowledge and enhance their capacity to learn.

EVALUATION

Evaluative procedures are an integral part of instruction. They provide a means for both teachers and students to measure growth and progress and to guide future learning. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that evaluative procedures be developmentally and culturally appropriate. The whole language or transformational philosophy reflects the belief that learning is an individual process which occurs most effectively within a supportive environment. Thematic units provide children with choice in their learning. The activities are opened and give the students freedom to learn, explore, investigate, and share with others. When students are involved in a particular theme, the learning process is context-oriented not fragmented or time labled. Therefore, it is important for evaluation tools and methods to be geared towards recognizing and assessing the development and growth of students.

Traditionally, standardized tests have been the most commonly used measures in American schools for classification, accountability, and monitoring student progress (Strickland and Morrow, 1989c). Many school districts rely on standardized test results to determine student promotion from grade level to grade level as well as placement in enrichment programs such as the Gifted and Talented Education program. These scores are also used to determine the necessity of retention or placement in remediation programs such as Resource Specialists programs and Special Education. Standardized test scores have also been used to compare students to their peers, schools to other schools, school district to school district, and state to state. Student performance on standardized tests have even been used as indicators of teacher performance.

Numerous problems are associated with standardized tests. The Report of the Commission on Reading (1985) found that standardized tests only evaluate a narrow range of knowledge and

skills. This type of test focuses on specific skills used in isolation and the test items allow for only one acceptable response (Strickland and Morrow, 1989c). Although Goodman, Goodman and Hood (1989) advocate evaluation based on authentic classroom reading experiences involving on-going activities, standardized tests use non-authentic reading examples to determine comprehension and understanding of reading material.

Standardized tests do not reflect many of the skills and understandings that are developing in young children, nor are they reflective of the development of personal characteristics of children (Strickland and Morrow, 1989c). These tests do not accurately measure the development of children's listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities or such items as appreciation of good literature, authors, illustrators, etc. The English-Language Arts Framework (1987) states that "although objective tests are clearly easier to administer, less expensive, or more quickly scored, they can measure only a small portion of what children have learned and understood" (p.35).

It is important that the ways in which a child's progress is monitored reflect the objectives of an instructional program. According to Strickland and Morrow (1989c), standardized measures are used to obtain evaluation information of a specific type and to evaluate children against prescribed expectations. Assessment, on the other hand, is designed to match instruction and therefore evaluates children as to what they have been learning. Standardized measures can be said to be primarily product oriented whereas assessment is process oriented.

Harp (1988b) contends that when assessment is process oriented, focused on improvement and growth, rather than product oriented, focused on skill mastery it is more reflective of the transformational philosophy. "Observing the process a student uses

provides the teacher with a window or view on how students arrive at products" (Rhodes, and Nathenson-Mejia, 1992, p.502). The implications of this research are that evaluation will be an ongoing process primarily involving informal tools rather than formal measures. Formal evaluation includes standardized tests and tests structured to determine if certain skills have been mastered, whereas informal evaluation includes student work samples, anecdotal records or notes that record the interactions between children and print, and observational evaluation, both teacher observation of students' and students' observations of one another. "Good assessment practices will include informal daily activities in which students commend each other for their strengths, teachers create environments in which students can succeed, and parents support their children's progress as part of evaluation" (English-Language Arts Framework, p.33).

Valencia (1990) believes that sound assessment must be anchored in authenticity. Assessment in the transformational classroom is based on authentic reading tasks and reading as an interactive process. Assessment tasks are designed to be as close to on-going classroom activities as possible (Au, Scheu, Kawakami, and Herman, 1990). In this way, valuable learning time is not lost to meet evaluation requirements. Authentic reading situations would be used as assessment opportunities.

Current research supports the importance of informal and subjective measures of diagnosis. Barrs (1990) recognizes that there is no real substitute for careful, ongoing assessment based on observation and teachers' records. Goodman (1986a) is a strong supporter of ongoing teacher observation which he terms "kid-watching". Teachers can evaluate by watching children write, listening to a group of children having a discussion, playing and participating in ongoing classroom activities. Goodman believes that "one can learn much more about pupils by carefully watching than

by formal testing" (p.41).

Anecdotal records are a powerful classroom tool for ongoing literacy assessment. Anecdotal recording involves observing children engaged in activities and recording what they are saying or doing. These records are also wonderful tools for evaluating the products of instruction. "...the openended nature of anecdotal records allows teachers to record the rich detail available in most observation of literacy processes and products" (Rhodes and Nathenson-Mejia, 1992, p. 502).

The content value of anecdotal records is tremendous. "...taken regularly, anecdotal notes become not only a vehicle for planning instruction and documenting progress, but also a story about an individual" (Rhodes and Nathenson-Mejia, 1992, p.503). Telling the story accumulated in anecdotal records is a natural and easy way to impart information about students' literacy progress to parents and others who care for children.

Student work samples collected throughout the year provide teachers with a means of observing growth. A broad range of material from across all curriculum areas can be collected, particularly samples that show evidence of progress and growth. Baskwill and Whitman (1988) recommend having children keep all theme related materials in a theme notebook to allow for easy access to samples of growth and development. These samples or theme notebooks can also be used at parent conferences and teacher-principal meetings.

Learning logs or response journals provide both teacher and students with a record of learning. In these logs, students can respond to a story or nonfiction piece they have read, a story they have listened to or a video or program they have watched (Sharp, 1989). Students can also record information they have discovered for the first time, a new understanding about the way things work or

the connections that link up information, and different ways of doing things which they have discovered (Baskwill and Whitman, 1988). Learning logs provide a clear view of how children are processing and perceiving classroom information and activities.

Audio cassettes of children's reading can also be used as evaluation tools. Baskwill and Whitman (1988) recommend that at least three times a year children's reading samples be collected of both the child's fluent reading of familiar material and an unrehearsed reading. In this way, tapes can provide a record of reading strategies and progress.

Baskwill and Whitman (1988) also recommend video cassettes as effective evaluative tools. These tapes provide teachers with an excellent basis for parent conferences. They provide not only an accurate audio record but a visual one as well. Videotapes have the added advantage of providing the teacher with a means of self-evaluation (Goodman, Goodman, and Hood, 1989).

For this project, the evaluation measures utilized will be focused on revealing the development of the learning, the teacher, and the curriculum. Both the teacher and the students will be involved in the evaluation process. The teacher will observe and evaluate student participation and effort in the variety of activities offered during the unit. The students will also self-evaluate their progress as well as participate in peer evaluations.

By enlisting student assistance in the evaluation process as well as keeping personal records, teachers can gain insights into the needs of the students and the effectiveness of the teacher role in the students' learning. The insights gained will assist teachers in making the changes necessary to develop an effective program.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, R. C., Hiebert, E. H., Scott, J. A., & Wilkinson, I. A. G. (1985). Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the Commission of Reading . Washington, DC : National Institute of Education.
- Alteri, J. L. (1991). Integrating literature and drama. The Reading Teacher , 45 , 74-75.
- Au, K. H. , Scheu, J. A. , Kawakami, A. J. , & Herman, P. A. (1990). Assessment and accountability in a whole literacy curriculum. The Reading Teacher , 43 , 574-578.
- Barrs, M. (1990). The primary language record : Reflection of issues in evaluation. Language Arts , 67 , 244-253.
- Baskwill, J. (1988a). Themestorming. Teaching K-8 , 19(1), 80-82.
- Baskwill, J. (1988b). Making connections. Teaching K-8 , 18(8), 42-43.
- Baskwill, J. , & Whitman, P. (1988c). Evaluation : Whole language, whole child . New York : Scholastic.
- Bishop, R. S. (1990). Walk tall in the world : African American literature for today's children's. Journal of Negro Education , 59 , 556-565.
- Brozo, W. G. , & Tomlinson, C. M. (1986). Literature : The key to lively content courses. The Reading Teacher , 40 , 288-293.
- Burns, M. (1987). Alphabet math. Instructor , 97(2), 48-50.
- Butler, D. & Clay, M. (1987). Reading begins at home : Preparing children for reading before they go to school . Portsmouth, NH : Heinemann.
- Calkins, L. M. (1986). The art of teaching writing . Portsmouth, New Hampshire : Heinemann.
- Camarata, C. (1991). Making connections : Introducing multicultural books. School Library Journal , 37 , 190-191.

- Cohen, M. (1974). Move him into reading with music. Instructor , 83(6), 60-62.
- Cullinan, B. (Ed.). (1987). Children's literature in the reading program . Newark, DE : International Reading Association.
- Cunningham, P. (1981). The clip sheet : Story dramatization. The Reading Teacher , 34 , 466-468.
- DeZengremel, K. (1990). Ham it up with thematic units. The Reading Teacher , 44 , 86.
- Diakiw, J. (1990). Children's literature and global education : Understanding the developing world. The Reading Teacher , 43 , 296-300.
- Early, M. (1990). Enabling first and second language learners in the classroom. Language Arts , 67 , 567-575.
- English Language Arts Curriculum Framework and Criteria Committee. (1987). English-Language Arts Framework , Sacramento, CA. : California State Department of Education.
- Fuhler, C. J. (1990). Let's move toward literature-based reading instruction. The Reading Teacher , 43 , 312-315.
- Goodman, K. (1986). What's whole in whole language ? Portsmouth, NH : Heinemann.
- Goodman, K. , Shannon, P. , Freeman, Y. , & Murphy, S. (1988). Report card on basal readers . Katonah, NY : Richard C. Owen Publishers.
- Goodman, K. S. , Goodman, Y. M. , & Hood, W. J. (Eds.). (1989). The whole language evaluation book . Portsmouth, NH : Heinemann.
- Harp, B. (1987). When the principal asks : "Why are your kids doing art during reading time?" The Reading Teacher , 41 , 346-347.
- Harp, B. (1988a). When the principal asks : "Why are your kids singing during reading time?" The Reading Teacher , 41 ,

454-456.

- Harp, B. (1988b). When the principal asks : "When you do whole language instruction, how will you keep track of reading and writing skills?" The Reading Teacher , 42 , 160-161.
- Harste, J. C. & Burke, C. L. "A New Hypothesis for Reading Teacher Research : Both Teaching and Learning of Reading are Theoretically Based." In P. David Pearson (Ed.) Reading : Theory , Research , and Practice . 26th Yearbook of National Reading Conference, Clemson, South Carolina, 1977, 32-40.
- Harste, J. D. , Short, K. G. , & Burke, C. L. (1988). Creating classrooms for authors . Portsmouth, NH : Heinemann.
- Hennings, D. G. (1982). Reading picture storybooks in the social studies. The Reading Teacher , 36 , 284-289.
- Hickman, J. (1990). Put the story into history. Instructor , 100(4) , 22-24.
- Huck, C. (1987). Children's literature in the elementary school. New York : Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, Inc.
- Jalongo, M. R. , & Bromley, K. D. (1984). Developing linguistic competence through song picture books. The Reading Teacher , 37 , 840-845.
- Lambert, J. W. (1989). Accepting others' values in the classroom : An important difference. The Clearing House , 62 , 273-274.
- Lamme, L. L. (1990). Exploring the world of music through picture books. The Reading Teacher , 44 , 294-300.
- Lundin, A. (1991). Secret gardens : The literature of childhood. Childhood Education , 67 , 215-217.
- McDonald, D. (1975). Music and reading readiness. Language Arts , 52 , 872-876.
- Miccinati, J. L. , & Phelps, S. (1980). Classroom drama from children's reading : From the page to the stage. The Reading Teacher , 34 , 269-272.

- Minderman, L. (1990). Literature and multicultural education. Instructor , 99 , 22-23.
- Moss, J. F. (1990). Building a literacy curriculum. Teaching K-8 , 20 , 40-43.
- O'Bruba, W. S. (1987). Reading through the creative arts. Reading Horizons , 27 , 170-177.
- Ohanian, S. (1989). Readin' 'rithmetic : Using children's literature to teach math. Learning , 18(3), 32-35.
- Ozman, H. , & Craver, S. (1990). Philosophical foundations of education (fourth edition). Columbus, OH : Merrill Publishing Company.
- Pappas, C. C., Kiefer, B. Z. & Levstik, L. S. (1990). An integrated perspective in the elementary school . New York : Longman.
- Radebaugh, M. R. (1981). Using children's literature to teach mathematics. The Reading Teacher , 34 , 902-906.
- Reed, E. W. (1989). Historical themes and activities for primary grades. Social Studies and the Young Learner , 2(2), 6-8.
- Renegar, S. L. (1990). Using predictable songs in beginning reading activities. Reading Horizons , 31 , 35-38.
- Rhodes, L. K. , & Nathenson-Mejia, S. (1992). Anecdotal records : A powerful tool for ongoing literacy assessment. The Reading Teacher , 45 , 502-509.
- Roser, N. L. , Hoffman, J. V. , & Farest, C. (1990). Language, literature, and at-risk children. The Reading Teacher , 43 , 554-559.
- Round Table. (1990). Ghost of classrooms past? Phase electives, thematic units. English Journal , 79 , 75-76.
- Routman, R. (1988). Transitions from literature to literacy . Portsmouth, NH : Heinemann.
- Routman, R. (1991). Invitations : Changing as teachers and learners

- K-12 . Portsmouth, NH : Heinemann.
- Sharp, Q. Q. (1989). Evaluation : Whole language checklists for evaluating your children . New York : Scholastic.
- Sherman, L. G. (1989). Making the math/science connection. Instructor , 98(7), 44-48.
- Smardo, F. A. (1982). Using children's literature to clarify science concepts in early childhood programs. The Reading Teacher , 36 , 267-273.
- Smith, F. (1985). Reading without nonsense . New York, NY : Teacher's College Press.
- Smith, F. (1992). Learning to read: The never-ending debate. Phi Delta Kappan , 73 , 432-441.
- Staab, C. (1991). Classroom organization : Thematic centers revisited. Language Arts , 68 , 108-113.
- Stanek, L. W. (1991). Whole language for whole kids. School Library Journal , 37 , 187-189.
- Strickland, D. S. , & Morrow, L. S. (1989a). Emerging readers and writers : Interactive experiences with storybook reading. The Reading Teacher , 42 , 322-323.
- Strickland, D. S. , & Morrow, L. S. (1989b). Emerging readers and writers : Reading, writing, and oral language. The Reading Teacher , 42 , 240-241.
- Strickland, D. S. , & Morrow, L. S. (1989c). Emerging readers and writers : Assessment and early literacy. The Reading Teacher , 42 , 634-635.
- Trachtenburg, P. & Ferruggia, A. , (1989). Big books from little voices : Reaching high risk beginning readers. The Reading Teacher , 42 , 284 -289.
- Trelease, J. (1989). The new read-aloud handbook . NY : Penguin.
- Valencia, S. (1990). A portfolio approach to classroom reading assessment : The whys, whats, and hows. The Reading

Teacher , 43 , 338-340.

Walker-Dalhouse, D. (1992). Using African-American literature to increase ethnic understanding. The Reading Teacher , 45 , 416-422.

APPENDICES

OVERVIEW

This project, as written, is intended for use in a first grade classroom. However, with slight modifications it can be adapted to fit any primary classroom. The Appendix consists of three thematic units built around the topics of Spiders, African folklore, and Elephants. Each thematic unit begins with the rationale for studying the particular topic and is followed by a list of key concepts and objectives for the unit. Each unit is designed with a literature base and follows an Into, Through, and Beyond format. In order for students to celebrate their learning, a culminating activity is suggested. Suggestions for student as well as teacher evaluation are included as well. The ideas presented in these units are offered only as suggestions which can be changed/adapted to fit into a variety of classroom situations/settings. Therefore, there is no set time frame given for individual lessons or the unit as a whole. It is fully expected that each teacher will add, delete, and make the changes necessary to allow for individual and/or class differences.

The activities in this project will invite students to engage in the communication processes of reading, writing, listening, and speaking across the curriculum. Activities will also focus on the alternative communication systems and will incorporate the use of all forms of art, music, dance, and drama. Throughout the units, children will have frequent opportunities to select their own activities and to work independently, in small groups, or in whole class settings.

The aim of each thematic unit is to inspire and motivate the students to read and write about the theme. The use of literature exposes the students to the world of books, fuels their imaginations, strengthens their knowledge and helps them gain a sense of personal identity as well as providing an enjoyable experience. These units are transformational in the sense that the literature selections and

activities are merely suggestions. The students and teacher can adapt them or create their own. The goal of this project is to introduce students into the world of reading and promote in them a love of learning.

APPENDIX A

SPIDERS

Rationale

Spiders are one of nature's most mysterious and misunderstood creatures. In spite of their abundance, the true nature of spiders has remained little known to the average person. Usually people can differentiate their friends from their enemies - but not always. Outstanding among humankind's unrecognized friends are the spiders. By many they are considered nuisances or, still worse, horrifying creatures that should be exterminated whenever possible. It is recommended that spider-haters study the facts. Every year spiders do away with millions upon millions of insects such as locusts and grasshoppers that would destroy grain crops, and with such consumers of green leaves as beetles and caterpillars, as well as with troublesome mosquitos and flies. In truth a spider is a timid creature, most anxious to avoid contact with humankind. It bites only when it is hurt or frightened and will usually walk over a person's skin without making any effort to bite. Probably the most general misunderstanding about spiders is that they are insects. Spiders are not insects. They are from a group of eight-legged creatures termed arachnids.

The purpose of this unit of study is to enable the students to overcome the misconceptions they may have about spiders and to inform them about the important position these arachnids occupy in the animal kingdom. The spider unit explores a number of different fictional and non-fictional books, as well as songs, poems, and videos. This thematic unit has been designed so that literature is integrated across the content areas in a meaningful and understandable way. Using an integrated approach with literature as the unifying element, the children are able to assimilate their learning into their own theories of the world and thus gain a more global and unified perspective of the role spiders play in the environment.

Activities are designed to empower and involve students in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The children are invited to participate in activities individually, with partners, in small groups, as a whole class, and with their families during home activities. The suggested literature selections and activities are not arranged in any definite order. In transformational units, it is expected that the teacher and students will arrange the curriculum in the manner that best fits their needs.

Concepts

This unit is built around the concept entitled "Diversity of Life" as drawn from the Science Framework for California public schools kindergarten through grade twelve (1990) as well as from the History-Social Science Framework (1985) in which the development of an awareness of cultural diversity in first grade is stressed. This unit is centered around the following subconcepts :

1. Living things need food, water, shelter, and space.
2. Living things share characteristics including growth, reproduction, and response to environmental stimuli.
3. There is tremendous diversity in living organisms and between them.
4. Every animal occupies its own unique habitat.
5. Spiders play an important role in maintaining the balance of nature.
6. Myths, folklore and superstitions about spiders are prevalent in many cultures.

Throughout The Unit

Reading materials such as books, magazines, and newspaper articles relating to spiders or other arachnids, as well as manipulative materials such as props and puppets will be available for student use throughout the unit. The particular literature choices read aloud by the teacher will also be made available to the students. All literary materials will be displayed in a specially designated area.

Each day during the course of the unit, the students will be invited to write in their individual reading logs. Students who wish to participate may share the information they have recorded in their logs. Sharing may take place between partners, in small groups, or as a whole class.

During storytime each afternoon the teachers will read aloud from Charlotte's Web by E. B. White. At various times throughout the unit the students will sing the songs and recite the poems they have learned about spiders.

Folders will be provided for students who wish to keep the work they have accumulated and information they have gathered in a special place. At the conclusion of the unit, the students can organize their collection to make a booklet. Students will also choose projects they wish to display on bulletin boards or other areas throughout the room.

Preparation For Thematic Unit On Spiders

Background information on insects would be beneficial to the study of spiders. Teachers may wish to implement a thematic unit on insects in general or to study a particular insect such as butterflies prior to implementing this spider unit.

It is important that the physical setup of the classroom facilitate the implementation of the unit. By discussing the setup of the classroom and how to use the limited space most comfortably and effectively, children will have a sense of ownership of the classroom as well as a sense of responsibility for its uses.

Flexibility of time and curricular focus is also a critical factor. Students require a great deal of time to concentrate on their reading and writing, to explore their interests, and to complete a project without interruption. Time is crucial for children to make connections and develop understandings between what they are learning and their own lives.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Spiders by I. Podendorf

This book introduces spiders and their habits : where they live, what they eat, how they move and protect themselves, how they help and harm people, and why they are called engineers.

INTO

- Purchase a stuffed toy spider to serve as a mascot for the duration of the unit. Display on the first day the theme is begun.
- Purchase a tarantula from the pet store. Keep it in a terrarium with several inches of soil. Be sure to provide water and live food such as crickets or mealworms. If a tarantula is purchased, a contest can be held to choose a name for the new class pet.
- Display posters, pictures, and photographs of spiders and other arachnids around the classroom.
- Designate a special section of the classroom library as the "Spider" section and display books, nature magazines, and photographs about spiders.
- Chart student and teacher feelings about spiders. Individually, students and the teacher can draw a picture and write a sentence that describes their feelings about spiders. Responses can then be recorded on chart paper. At the culmination of the unit this activity can be repeated to see if attitudes have changed.
- As a whole group, students can brainstorm all that they know about spiders. The teacher can record the responses on chart paper. Students can then respond to the question of what they would like to learn about spiders. These responses can also be recorded. A third chart can be kept indicating the information that the children learn throughout course of the unit. A fourth chart indicating a list of resources from which students can obtain information can also be generated.

THROUGH

- Read orally and discuss Spiders by I. Podendorf.
- Discuss with students the qualities that differentiate spiders from insects (eight legs, eight eyes, etc.)

BEYOND

- As a class, the students can insert phrases from the brainstorming activity and the reading into a frame for a class poem and/or chant. When this is completed, the class may chorally read it aloud.
- Students may respond to the literature by writing/drawing in their journals or literature logs.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Charlotte's Web by E. B. White

This tale is about a little girl named Fern who deeply cares for a little pig named Wilbur. It is Wilbur's destiny to be butchered in the Fall. However, Charlotte, a beautiful grey spider who lives in the barn with Wilbur, along with the other barn animals, conspire with Fern to save the pig's life.

INTO

-Discuss with students spider webs that they may have discovered in their backyards. Ask them about the various uses webs may have for spiders. Explain that during the course of this unit, they will be listening to a story about a spider named Charlotte and the rather unusual use her web has for her friend Wilbur the pig.

THROUGH

-Each day during the course of the unit, read a chapter of Charlotte's Web.

-Discuss new vocabulary which the students have questions or concerns about. Example : In chapter V, Charlotte tells Wilbur she is "nearsighted." Students can offer their own definitions, then the class can work together to find the definition.

-Each day students can work with a partner and discuss the main idea(s) of the chapter read. They can make predictions about what will happen next.

-Use visualization to help students internalize the text. Students may visualize the chapter scenes in their minds and draw or illustrate visualized scenes and characters.

BEYOND

-Display spider books in a designated area or on a bookshelf. Give book talks to stimulate student interest. Students who have read a particular book may also want to give a future booktalk.

-Encourage children to visit the local branch library to find spider books on their own. They can share their findings with the class.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Amazing World of Spiders by J. Craig & J. Helmer

This factual book differentiates between arachnids and insects. The characteristics and behavior of different kinds of spider are discussed. Both the web-spinning and hunting spiders are portrayed in their natural habitats.

INTO

-Begin a discussion about classification. Questions can be asked such as, "What makes people who they are?" and "What do people have in common?" The discussion can then proceed to why spiders are classified as arachnids and not as insects. The different characteristics of insects and spiders can be discussed such as the number of legs, body components, and shape insects and spiders have. If the (concept) does not arise naturally in discussion, the teacher can mention that not all spiders have the ability to spin webs.

THROUGH

- Read and discuss Amazing World of Spiders
- Confirm, refine ideas about spiders stated earlier in the discussion section.
- Write in reading logs.

BEYOND

- Using an art medium of personal choice, students can illustrate one variety of spider in its natural habitat and write or dictate a descriptive sentence to accompany the completed project.
- Create a chart indicating the differences between insects and spiders. This chart can be developed from the information generated from the literature discussion.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

A First Look at Spiders by M. Selsam & J. Hunt

This book explains how spiders differ from other creatures and from each other. It describes what scientist look for when they go about classifying spiders. The various types of spider webs are also discussed.

INTO

-Draw a Venn Diagram on a chalkboard, overhead projector, or piece of chart paper. Have children compare and contrast a spider and an insect. Write facts that are true only about spiders in the spider section, facts that are only true about insects in the insect section, and facts that are true about both in the center section.

THROUGH

- read aloud A First Look at Spiders .
- Add or delete information on the Venn Diagram.
- Write in reading logs.

BEYOND

- To see if students can differentiate between spiders and insects, invite students to draw a picture of a spider being sure to include all of its body parts (two body segments, eight eyes, and eight legs). Label the body parts.
- Using white paper and a pencil or black paper and chalk for contrast, students can illustrate one of the several types of spider webs (funnel-web, tangled web, sheet-web, orb-web, triangle web, or single thread web) from the Selsam and Hunt book. Students may label their drawings with the appropriate name.
- As a manipulative activity, students can work with a partner to form webs with geo boards and yarn or rubber bands to gain insight as to the difficulty involved in web construction as well as to see if students can differentiate between various types of webs.

-In order to answer any unresolved questions and to gain more insight into the fascinating world of spiders, an arachnologist (scientist who specializes in the study of arachnids) can be invited to speak to the class or, more ideally, a class field trip can be arranged to visit a natural history museum to view a spider collection. Prior to the trip students can generate a list of questions of inquiry. For example : How many specimens of arachnids does the museum have? What countries are represented? What is the largest (or smallest) spider they have? What is the most unusual spider in the collection?

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Like Jake and Me by M. Jukes

A young boy, Alex, believes that he does not have much in common with his stepfather, Jake, until a fuzzy spider, a wolf spider, brings them together.

INTO

-Discuss phobias and what the teacher and students are afraid of and what causes them to be scared.

-Discuss the term arachnophobia as well as the various reasons why people fear spiders (ignorance, etc.).

THROUGH

-Read aloud Like Jake and Me by M. Jukes.

-Write in reading logs.

BEYOND

-Relate Jake's experience to students' lives. Students can share their experiences in small groups and then individually write and illustrate their story.

-Given the vivid description of a wolf spider in this story and the lack of a very clear illustration, the students can draw what they think a wolf spider would look like up close. When finished, students can use the class reference books on spiders to compare their illustrations to those in the books and make changes if they wish.

-The students can make their favorite spider or the arachnid they find most interesting. Have available several types of materials in order that students can make their spider as realistic as possible. For example, pipe cleaners could be used to make a fuzzy wolf spider as described in Like Jake and Me.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

The Lady and the Spider by F. Mc Nulty

This is a tale about a spider, living in a head of lettuce, who is saved from death when the lady who finds her puts her back into the garden.

INTO

-Share stories about spiders students have come across in their gardens, yards, or in their home and what transpired when they found these creatures.

THROUGH

-Read aloud The Lady and the Spider.

-Recall details of the story by asking questions such as : What did you learn about spiders from this story? What dangers did the spider face?

-Initiate a discussion by asking questions such as : Why do you think the lady rescued the spider? How was the spider a help in her garden? What do you do when you see a spider? What will you do the next time you see a spider?

-Write in reading logs.

BEYOND

-With a partner or in small groups, students can write an updated version of "Little Miss Muffet"

-Dramatize updated student versions of the "Little Miss Muffet" nursery rhyme.

-Go on a spider hunt to collect spiders for observation of physical characteristics and habits (the teacher will capture the spiders for student safety and the spiders will later be released). The spiders can be collected in a bug viewer, a container with a magnifying lid designed specifically for this purpose, or a jar with holes punctured in the lid.

-Find spider eggs and watch them hatch. Magnifying glasses will be helpful for this activity.

-Discuss life from the viewpoint of a spider. Encourage students to use descriptive language to write a story from a spider's viewpoint.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Be Nice to Spiders by M. B. Graham

A young boy, Billy, leaves his pet spider at the zoo. The lions and other zoo animals are happy and contented until the spider webs are swept away. The spider, Helen, solves the problem and wins a permanent place of honor for herself in the zoo.

INTO

-Discuss the ways in which spiders are helpful creatures.

THROUGH

-Read Be Nice to Spiders .

-Write in reading logs.

BEYOND

-Make posters to display around the school indicating why people should be nice to spiders.

-Go on a spider hunt.

-Spider Observation-Provide one jar for every five students. Each jar will have a little soil on the bottom and a few dead leaves and twigs which students can collect. Place a cotton ball soaked with water in the jar. Keep the jar out of the sun. Put one spider in each jar (teacher collected). Some activities which students can do with their spiders throughout the unit can be listed on chart paper, for example : use magnifying glasses to view all the characteristics of the spiders, accurately illustrate the spider, watch as your spider spins a web, add a live insect and watch the spider trap and eat its prey, keep a daily record of the spider's activities, compare your spider to an insect and chart the similarities and differences.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Spider's Web by C. Back & B. Watts

The text and photographs in this book describe how a garden spider spins her web and how she uses the web to catch food.

INTO

-Recite and discuss the poem "Spider" by P. Colum.

THROUGH

-Read aloud Spider's Web.

-Discuss the balance of nature.

-Write in reading logs.

BEYOND

-Mark an old sheet with black marker to make a web. Out on a playground, adult and children hold ends of sheet and others (flies) try to run under and through. Those holding the web will lower the sheet in an attempt to catch flies.

-Make up a song to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell". The song can be entitled "The Spider in the Web" and can be sung with children naming insects the spider may catch in its web.

-Web Hunt - Hunt for spider webs around home or school. Record observations on a chart. Make a map indicating where at home or school the webs are located. For example, if a map of a student's backyard is drawn, the student may indicate where the spider web is in the yard (north, south, east, west, southeast, and so on).

-Spider web design nail board (home activity). Hammer nails one inch apart in rows over entire wooden board or decoupage board. Spray paint (black makes the best background) and dry. Make designs by stretching rubber bands on the nails, or use colored thread for more permanent designs.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Spider Silk by A. Goldin

Goldin describes the many different kinds of spider webs and the wonderful process by which they are made. She writes about the strength of the fine threads of spider silk and of their various uses.

INTO

-Make a human web. Students stand in circles of five or six. They should stand close together facing the center of the circle. Students then close their eyes and reach forward to take one hand in each of their own. Students then open their eyes and, without talking and without letting go for any reason, unwind back into a circle. Afterwards discuss feelings about the task. Explore the idea of cooperation and individuality. Discuss what might have been done to make the task easier. Explore what might be done to help a group member succeed. Repeat task as long as interest is maintained.

THROUGH

-Read aloud Spider Silk .
-Write in reading logs.

BEYOND

-Catch a web. Find a spider web outdoors. Chase away the spider. Spray both sides of the web lightly with spray paint (do not inhale the paint fumes). Hold a piece of construction paper or poster board (a dark color) against the web and cut the guy lines of the web. Let the spider web dry. (home activity)
-Use hairspray (pump not aerosol) to attach a spider web to black paper. (home activity)
-Play a web game. Students standing in a large circle join and raise their hands to make a web. A small group of students (insects) run in and out of the circle. The teacher signals students to lower their arms to trap the insects. Those trapped become a part of the web.

When all insects are caught, new ones are chosen.

-Make a spider web. As a whole class or in groups of five or six, students sit in a circle. Using a large ball of yarn, children pass the ball or toss it across the circle to form a web-like design. Children hold onto their ends of the yarn until finished. Photographs can be taken of the finished products for later display. Reverse the spinning of the web in sequence by winding up the ball of yarn. Watch out for knots!

Synopsis of the literature selection :

I Love Spiders by J. Parker

Parker's rhythmic descriptions of these creepy crawlers and their antics are delightfully predictable. Together with Parkinson's illustrations, they give children an opportunity to see spiders from a more positive point of view.

INTO

-Graph student attitudes about spiders.

THROUGH

-Read aloud I Love Spiders.

-Write in reading logs.

BEYOND

-In groups of two, students can use a large piece of construction paper or storybook paper to write or dictate a descriptive sentence about their favorite spider. They can illustrate one variety of spider in its natural habitat using pencils, crayons, colored pencils or markers, or other self-selected materials.

-Children can make book jackets for their favorite spider books to display on a bulletin board. A group of students can weave a large web out of yarn and construct a spider to place on the web.

-Make a paper mache pinata resembling a spider. Every student should have an opportunity to help with this project as it will be used later for the culminating activity. Students can also make smaller versions of the paper mache spider to take home as souvenirs.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Anansi the Spider by G. McDermott

Anansi is a folk hero of the Ashanti people of Ghana, a spider with human qualities. In this tale, Anansi falls into a river and is swallowed by a fish. His six extraordinary sons save him. Anansi has acquired a "great globe of light" during his journey and wishes to bestow it upon his rescuer. His dilemma of which of his six sons to reward is solved when he calls upon Nyame, the God of All Things.

INTO

-Discuss what the definitions or meanings are for the following terms : myth, folktale, and superstition. Accept all responses and facilitate the discussion to proceed on to a clarification of the terms.

THROUGH

- Read aloud Anansi the Spider.
- Watch the video version of Anansi the Spider.
- Learn to sing Raffi's "Anansi" song.
- Write in reading logs.
- Draw a picture to indicate each segment of Anansi's dilemma. For example : someone (Anansi), wants (to reward the son who rescued him), but (all six sons helped), so (the moon was put in the sky for all to enjoy).

BEYOND

- Compare and contrast the Anansi video to the piece of literature.
- To gain a better understanding of the geometric design motifs used in the book, students may wish to make their own spider illustrations using geometric forms.
- Use an overhead projector and a copy of the text to guide the students through the process of editing the text to create a reader's theater script of the Anansi story.

-In groups of eight, students may choose the characters they wish to portray and practice and rehearse their reader's theatre scripts.

-Students may write an Anansi tale that explains the sun's existence (rather than the moon).

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock by E. Kimmel.

In this folktale, the mischievous Anansi discovers a magic moss-covered rock. He uses this rock to play tricks on his forest friends. The forest creatures ultimately outsmart Anansi but being the rogue that he is, the lesson is shortlived.

INTO

-Relate this story to the Anansi the Spider story. Point out that it is not by the same author and as a matter of fact, several authors have written Anansi stories.

-Discuss African folktales.

THROUGH

-Read aloud Anansi and the Moss-Covered rock.

-Re-read the story several times so that students become very familiar with events and characters.

-Write in reading logs.

BEYOND

-Students can re-enact the story using their own dialogue.

-Students can sing Raffi's Anansi song.

-Students can create a three-dimensional illustration or collage based upon the story using pencils, crayons and a small piece of moss with which to cover their rock.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

The Very Busy Spider by E. Carle

Early one morning a little spider begins to spin her web on a fence post. The farm animals try to divert her, but she persists and produces a thing of both beauty and usefulness.

INTO

-Play a detective game. In cooperative groups of five or six students will open a bag of story clues prepared by the teacher. The bags can contain pictures of the animals in the story, a plastic spider or other such clues. Students can take turns exploring the items. As a group, students may make up a story based on their clues. The reporter of each group can orally report the group's story to the class.

THROUGH

-Read aloud The Very Busy Spider.

-Relate the story to the stories made up by the cooperative groups.

What are the similarities/differences?

-Invite students to join in the reading of this repetitive text.

Encourage them to make the sounds of each of the farm animals illustrated.

-Write in reading logs.

BEYOND

-Using class-made props, several students can dramatize the story while the remainder of the class chorally reads the text. Roles may be alternated as long as interest is maintained.

-Independently or with a partner, build a web on dark paper with glue and glitter, string or cooked spaghetti. The result will be an upraised web as illustrated in the story.

-Invite students to read other books by Eric Carle.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

The Adventures of Spider by J. Arkhurst

Arkhurst has brought these six stories of Spider from Liberia and Ghana. She writes about how spider became the way he is - how he got a thin waist, why he lives on ceiling, how he got a bald head, how he helped a fisherman, why he lives in dark corners, and how the world got wisdom.

INTO

-Participate in a spider web hunt. The teacher should set up this activity during a recess, before school, or during lunch. A large supply of string or yarn is required. Attach one end of a ball of string to the finish point. Run the string all over the room, under chairs, around the furniture, on top of bookshelves. Do the same for each player. The room will be crisscrossed with string like a giant spiderweb. Each player takes an end and follows his/her string to the starting point. Be sure that each string is rewound into a ball when the hunt is over so that it can be reused. Prizes can be distributed if desired or students can play just for the enjoyment of untangling the web. (Idea borrowed from Caroline Feller Bauer in This Way to Books)

THROUGH

- Read aloud The Adventures of Spider.
- Discuss the qualities that make a story interesting. Ask the students to name good action words that could be used in stories and to describe exciting story settings.
- Write in reading logs.

BEYOND

- Participate in a story circle activity. Have the students sit in a circle. Roll a ball to a student and ask that student to begin a story. When that student is ready to stop, he or she may roll the ball to

another student who then continues the story. Students may continue rolling the ball and adding onto the story until the story is complete.

-Make a spider accordion book out of butcher paper. Add black pipe cleaners for the legs. Inside, write a creative paragraph about a spider.

-Students can learn to sing the Spider on the Floor song by Raffi.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Anansi Goes Fishing by E. Kimmel

In this folktale, the mischievous Anansi likes to eat fish, but he is much too lazy to catch them for himself. He decides to trick Turtle into catching a fish for him instead.

INTO

-Relate this story to Anansi the Spider and Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock .

THROUGH

- Read aloud Anansi Goes Fishing .
- Discuss what it means to be a "trickster" like Anansi.
- Write in reading logs.

BEYOND

- Individually, with a partner, or in small groups students may write an original Anansi tale.
- Compete in a spider race. Using a heavy grade of paper or posterboard, draw two large spiders on separate 5" cards. Punch a hole in the card and run a six-foot piece of string through the hole. Attach one end to the legs of a chair. One student and a partner may stand at the other end and maneuver the spiders from where the students stand to the chair. The first spider to the chair wins. This game can also be played racing Anansi and the turtle.

Synopsis of the video selection :

Inky, dinky spider

This video portrays the Florida everglades where spiders establish their summer kingdom. Lorne Greene narrates a fascinating look at spiders as hunters as well as safe and effective pesticides.

INTO

-Tell students that now that they have read about many types of spiders, they will have the opportunity to see some of these fascinating creatures in their natural habitat.

THROUGH

-Watch the video Inky, dinky spider

BEYOND

-Invite the students to participate in a creative dramatic activity and encourage them to move like spiders in many different ways : delicately on a web, spinning a web, pouncing on an insect, using a dragline, ballooning like spiderlings, escaping from a predator, burrowing in the ground, molting their skin, walk like a tarantula.

Culminating Activity

The culminating activity can be a day long adventure. The morning activities can consist of cooperative groups performing readers' theater scripts, puppet theater, skits and so on. As a midmorning activity, the video version of Charlotte's web can be shown after which students can compare and contrast the video version of the story to the piece of literature . Students may release any spiders which are left in the classroom observation area. They should be set free in a safe area of the playground.

Later in the afternoon, the class can go outside to take turns at breaking the pinata they made earlier in the unit. The teacher may wish to fill the pinata with plastic spiders, spider stickers, spider shaped candy, or other such items which relate to the unit. In final celebration of the spider unit, the students can help to make and eat such delicious treats as "dirt cups" as illustrated in the Jell-o kids cooking fun book. These cups are made out of jello pudding topped with crushed cookies (dark brown to look like dirt). Students can make marshmallow spiders out of a large marshmallow for the spider body, M & M's for the eyes and thin red string licorice for the legs. These marshmallow spiders can be placed on top of the dirt cups for students to enjoy prior to eating their treats.

Evaluation For Thematic Unit

Evaluation reveals the development of the learning, the teacher, and the curriculum and is, therefore, an integral part of the curriculum. It is necessary for the classroom community and its organization to be kept in mind when planning for evaluation of thematic units. Because the classroom community involves both students and teacher, it is important for every member of these two groups to be involved in the evaluation process. In order that evaluation be consistent with the teacher's philosophy and the way the children have been exposed to the world of learning, the process, the product, and attitudes should be evaluated. Evaluation serves several purposes. It is useful in planning and modifying units so that they will be more effective. It is also effective in assisting teachers in determining student progress and interest as well as enabling them to reflect on their own professional development as teachers.

During the course of the unit, students will be writing in their reading logs. As part of the evaluation procedure, the teacher will confer individually with the students about their writing and record some brief notes regarding the nature of their work, strengths shown in the work, and problems the student may be having. Together the student and the teacher will discuss the student's work and make decisions about what improvements the writer can make and what direction can be taken next. In this way not only will the teacher be evaluating the students, but each individual will also be conducting a self-evaluation.

The group projects on which the students work will also be evaluated through teacher observation and questions that encourage students to reflect on their completed project and think about ways they could change it or make improvements.

Anecdotal records can be kept by the teacher which include

notes about interactions observed between one child and print, between partners, between small groups of children, and during whole class activities.

Ongoing "kid-watching" is a valuable assessment tool, especially when assessing student participation and effort in music, art, drama, and physical education activities.

Review of audio cassettes or videotapes made can be helpful in determining the success of the thematic unit in its entirety as well as providing teachers with a sense of student growth, interests, and needs in other content areas.

Peer evaluation is just as important as self-evaluation. During student conferences, the students are asked to evaluate their own progress. As many activities involve partners working together or small groups, students can be asked to evaluate both their own part of a project as well as that of their peers. They can respond to questions such as : What was your contribution to the activity? What did my partner or partners do? What did we learn while participating in the activity/project?

SPIDER BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arkhurst, J. (1964). The adventures of spider . Boston : Little Brown and Company.
- Back, C. & Watts, B. (1986). Spider's web . Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Silver Burdett Press.
- Barbera, J. & Hanna, W. (Producers), & Nichols, C. & Takamoto, I. (Directors). (1979). Charlotte's web . [Videotape].
- Bauer, C. F. (1983) . This way to books . New York : The H. W. Wilson Company.
- Carle, E. (1984) . The very busy spider . New York : Philomel Books.
- Colum, P. (1964). "Spider", Roofs of gold (p.85). New York : The Macmillan Co.
- Craig, J. & Helmer, J. (1990) . Amazing world of spiders . New Jersey : Troll Associates.
- Goldin, A. (1964) . Spider silk . New York : Thomas Y. Crowell Company.
- Graham, M. B. (1967). Be nice to spiders . New York : Harper & Row Publishers.
- Greene, C. (Producer/Director), & Dewer, S. (Producer) . (1987) . Lorne Green's New Wilderness - Inky, dinky spider . [Videotape] . Los Angeles, CA : Prism Entertainment Corp.
- Jukes, M. (1984) . Like Jake and me . New York : Harper & Row Publishers.
- Kimmel, E. (1988) . Anansi and the moss-covered rock . New York : Holiday House, Inc.
- Kimmel, E. (1992) . Anansi goes fishing . New York : Holiday House, Inc.
- Mc Dermott, G. (1972) . Anansi the spider . New York : Henry Holt and Company, Inc.
- Mc Dermott, G. (Producer/Director). (1969). Anansi the spider .

- [Videotape] . Chicago, IL : PMI/Films Incorporated.
- Mc Nulty, F. (1986) . The lady and the spider . New York : Harper & Row, Publishers.
- Parker, J. (1988) . I love spiders . New York : Scholastic, Inc.
- Podendorf, I. (1982) . Spiders . Chicago : Children's Press.
- Raffi & Whitely, K. (1979). The corner grocery store . Ontario, Canada : A & M Records, Inc.
- Selsam, M. & Hunt, J. (1983). A first look at spiders . New York : Walker and Company.
- White, E. B. (1952) . Charlotte's web . New York : Harper & Row, Publishers.

APPENDIX B

**AFRICAN
FOLKLORE**

Rationale

Folklore exerts its appeal down through the ages and in widely separated cultures because it deals with the deepest human feelings and experiences. By reading the stories of various cultures, children can enjoy the mystery of fear and courage, good and evil, wisdom and folly, fortune and misfortune, cruelty and kindness. The tales help readers and listeners to develop a better understanding of the world's often confusing dimensions.

Folklore consists of three main elements : stories tell of people's customs and beliefs; stories are told or read over and over again to be passed on from generation to generation; and folklore is often related by storytellers for entertainment purposes.

In a multicultural society, it is important for literacy development to be nurtured in a setting which recognizes and celebrates both diversity and common humanity. The purpose of this unit is to enable students to explore the commonalities between African culture and their own. The literature selections are arranged in order of region. However, it is expected that each teacher, in cooperation with the students, will organize the texts and activities in the manner best suited to their interests and needs. Although the focus of this unit is on the unity of humankind, the subject matter of the stories will permit an easy and natural springboard to the development of other educational issues.

Concepts

The History - Social Science Framework (1988) recommends that students in first grade develop an awareness of cultural diversity and expand their knowledge of geographic and economic worlds.

The following concepts reflect this recommendation :

1. The United States is composed of many different cultures.
2. Every individual comes from a unique cultural background.
3. Warm and loving human relationships, especially within the family, are an important part of all cultures.
4. People and cultures are much more alike than they are different.
5. African American history, heritage, and culture is an integral part of society.

Throughout The Unit

Reading materials such as books, magazines, and other literary materials relating to African folklore and the country of Africa, as well as manipulative materials such as props and puppets will be available for student use throughout the unit. The particular literature choices read aloud by the teacher will also be made available to the students. All literary materials will be displayed in a specially designated area.

Each day during the course of the unit, the students will be invited to write in the individual reading logs. Students who wish to participate may share the information they have recorded in their logs. Sharing may take place between partners, in small groups, or as a whole class.

Folders will be provided for students who wish to keep the work they have accumulated and information they have gathered in a special place. At the conclusion of the unit, the students can organize their collection to make a booklet. Student work will also be displayed on bulletin boards or other areas throughout the room.

Preparation For Thematic Unit On African Folklore

A spider unit emphasizing tales of Anansi would provide a natural bridge to this African Folklore unit.

It is important that the physical setup of the classroom facilitate the implementation of the unit. By discussing the setup of the classroom and how to use the limited space most comfortably and effectively, children will have a sense of ownership of the classroom as well as a sense of responsibility for its use.

Flexibility of time and curricular focus is also a critical factor. Students require a great deal of time to concentrate on their reading and writing, to explore their interests, and to complete a project without interruption. Time is crucial for children to make connections and develop understandings between what they are learning and their own lives.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

A Story, A Story retold by G. E. Haley

Once there were not any stories on earth for people to hear or tell because they all belonged to Nyame, the Sky God. This African tale describes how Ananse, the Spider man, pays the price asked for Nyame's stories and releases these stories to the world.

INTO

- Discuss the term "folklore".
- Brainstorm with children what the class knows about the country of Africa and African folklore.
- Ask students if they remember Anansi from the spider unit. Have students draw a picture of the way they remember Anansi looked or how they predict he will look in the book they are about to hear read aloud.

THROUGH

- Read aloud A Story, A Story .
- Write in reading logs .
- Students may wish the reading to be stopped for a moment when they discover that Ananse in the story is not the same as Anansi the spider but is, in fact, a spider man. If so, stop the reading for a brief discussion of this fact.
- Explain to students that many African stories are called "Spider Stories". This book tells how this came to be. "Spider Stories" tell how small, defenseless men or animals outwit others and succeed against great odds. These stories crossed the Atlantic Ocean in the cruel ships that delivered slaves to the Americas. Their descendants still tell some of these stories today.

BEYOND

- Use an overhead projector to guide the students in editing the text to develop a reader's theater script of the story.

-Students can choose the character whose part they wish to read. In cooperative groups, students may practice their parts and further develop their reader's theater script.

-Students may wish to make masks of their favorite characters to use to act out the story.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Ashanti to Zulu by M. Musgrove

In this book, M. Musgrove has taken twenty-six African tribes and described a tradition they practice. Each tribe begins with a different letter. Put into alphabetical order this makes a unique ABC book. A map of Africa pin-pointing each tribe is an extra benefit at the end of the book.

INTO

-Invite an individual of African heritage to class to tell the students about their culture. This person may wish to come dressed in their native garb.

-Discuss the term "tradition".

THROUGH

-Read aloud Ashanti to Zulu .

-Write in reading logs .

BEYOND

-Locate the various tribes mentioned in the book on a map of Africa.

-Students can create some of the arts described by the egg decorating Kung tribe, the jewelry making Masai, the weaving Ashanti, or grow plants and vegetable. The products of their efforts could then be bartered as the Quádai did or a money system could be created. The products could be sold at a class/school bazaar.

-Students could enjoy the Pondo game of sparing with sticks, Zulu dancing, and the challenge of balancing objects on their heads (the students could do relays with tennis balls in baskets, walking on a line). The students could then study and play early American games like stick ball and hoop rolling.

-Students role play traditions such as those of the Ikoma and the Ga. The Ikoma tribe feed honey to a tiny bird in thanks for leading them to the honey. The Ga make a food, fofou, using a mortar and pestle

type tool. The Masai men braid their hair. The women shave their hair and wear a great deal of jewelry.

-In the book Ashanti to Zulu , the single paragraph per tribe generates much curiosity. In cooperative groups students could do research to gather further information about the tribes.

-Students can create their own alphabet book on a subject of interest.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears by V. Aardema

This West African folktale humorously explains why mosquitoes buzz in people's ears. Mosquito began telling a tall tale to Iguana. Iguana did not enjoy the story and grumped away after putting sticks in his ears to avoid hearing any more of this tale. What happened next caused many problems for the jungle animals.

INTO

- Introduce the author as a person who enjoys telling and writing African folktales. Explain to students that you will be sharing several of her books, including Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain , Oh, Kojo! How could you? , and Who's in Rabbit's House?
- Present the biographical information available about Leo and Diane Dillon. Tell the class that they are a married couple who enjoy illustrating books for students. They feel that they can and do provide a special kind of magic through illustrations. They do not think adults should simplify things that are written and illustrated for children.

THROUGH

- Read aloud Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears .
- Write in reading logs .
- At a listening center students can listen to the audio cassette while they follow along in the text.
- Discuss the dramatic artwork in the story. Compare the style with other illustrators, such as Tomie De Paola. The artwork appears to have a certain freedom of motion and appears simplistic in structure. However, it is in fact very complex. The illustrations are a combination of watercolors airbrushed onto the paper, pastels hand-applied, and India ink. Paper cutting was also used.
- Discuss the comment by the Dillons that the artwork should not only

restate the text, but enlarge on it. What can they see in the illustrations that is not stated in the story?

-Compare the artwork in Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears to Ashanti to Zulu . Both stories were illustrated by the Dillons but written by different authors.

BEYOND

- Write a tall tale about one of the animals in the story .
- Re-create the story using a variety of class - made puppets.
- Students can create the sound effects to match those which are written in the story as nonsense words.
- Students can create their own sound effects and record the results.
- Study the repetition in the story. Students can create their own chant.
- Students can study the jungle environment and the behavior of the animals portrayed in the story. Do they act realistically? Compare and contrast.
- Research the mosquito. Is there a scientific explanation for their buzzing?
- Research in cooperative groups and report to the class other animals of Africa.
- Create African animal head masks to represent the animals in the story.
- Present the story as a class play. Use masks and costumes.
- Write and illustrate a fictional story explaining a natural phenomenon.
- Extend the story by writing about the animal council's treatment of the mosquito.
- Suppose the sun had not come up again. Write a story about the effects on the animals and the environment.
- Should all the animals be punished because they were involved in the events which caused the owlet to die? Students can write their

opinion.

-Write about how you would have solved the problem in the story in a different way.

-Write a story about an incident in which you were accused of being at fault. Was anyone else involved who contributed to the problem?

-Students can find out what people are doing about endangered animals in Africa and in other countries and consider the part they can play in helping endangered animals.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Moja Means One by M. Feelings

This is a Swahili counting book in which the author accompanies the American symbolic form of the numbers one to ten with the written Swahili form of the number. The author also accompanies each numbered page with an interesting fact about Africa. The illustrations correspond to the number being represented.

INTO

-Orally count from one to ten with the students. Discuss the fact that this is not the way all children learn to say their numbers.

THROUGH

-Read aloud Moja Means One .

-Write in reading logs .

-During a second reading of the literature, students can repeat the Swahili numbers.

BEYOND

-Share E. Jenkin's "Counting in Swahili" song on her album Jambo and other Call-and-Response Songs and Chants . Invite students to sing along.

-Individually or with a partner, students can write and illustrate a counting book in their own native language.

-Make beaded necklaces using only ten beads or sets of ten of each color of bead.

-Make African beads (from American ingredients). The recipe and directions for this activity can be found in This Way to Books by C. F. Bauer. This activity would be a great family activity.

-Play an African "bean" game (home activity). Take turns asking questions about Africa, its animals, culture, geography, and folktales. Collect a bean for each correct answer. When the game is over, the

person who has the most beans wins the round. An encyclopedia or books about Africa can be used to make up questions and find answers.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Jambo Means Hello by M. Feelings

The letters of the alphabet from A to Z are accompanied by luminously illustrated Swahili words which recreate the traditions of East African life. This is a Caldecott Honor book.

INTO :

-Discuss and list the many languages the students in the classroom speak.

THROUGH

-Read aloud Jambo Means Hello .

-Share E. Jenkins "Jambo" song from the album Jambo and other Call-and-Response Songs and Chants .

-Write in reading logs .

BEYOND

-Individually or with a partner, students can write and illustrate an alphabet book in their own native language.

-Students can draw an African animal for each letter of their name .

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain by V. Aardema

According to Aardema, this tale was discovered in Kenya, Africa by the famous anthropologist Sir Claud Hollis. This tale reminded Sir Claud of the cumulative nursery rhyme "The House That Jack Built". Aardema has re-written the story of how Ki-pat helped to end the drought on Kapiti plain using the rhythm of "The House That Jack Built".

INTO

-Read aloud The House That Jack Built to refresh students memories or create a background for those who have never heard the story.

THROUGH

-Read aloud Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain .

-Write in reading logs .

-Discuss the importance of water to the African animals. Relate the story to the current drought situation.

-Discuss the relationship between The House that Jack Built and Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain .

BEYOND

-Watch the Reading Rainbow video version of Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain . Compare and contrast this version to the book.

-Students can work with a partner (perhaps an uppergrade student) or in research teams in order to find out information about African animals. Chart paper can be used to list information or create a "Semantic Analysis Chart" which incorporates the following headings : Animal's name, size, food, habitat, habits, and more fascinating facts. The students would be responsible for reporting their findings to the class and for adding their information to the chart.

-On a piece of tagboard, an outline of a map of Africa can be made

with the use of an overhead projector. Students can make drawings of the animal they are studying on three by five cards and attach them to the map. Students will have to find out in what region or area of Africa their animal can be found. The map and chart can be hung together for students to refer for discussion and writing activities.

-Students can learn to sing "Pole Pole" by E. Jenkins in the album Jambo and other Call-and-Response Songs and Chants . This is a song about African animals. The men of Kenya sing the song as they rhythmically dance with spears. Students may wish to use class-made props and choreograph dance steps they can do while singing this song.

-Learn "Gogo" a singing game from Kenya in the World of Music albums by Silver Burdett & Ginn . The students can make their own drums to play while singing the song. Other students can act out the movements and facial expressions.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Abiyoyo by P. Seeger

When a town is threatened by the terrible giant, Abiyoyo, a little boy and his father come up with a plan to save the townspeople. This book is based on a South African lullaby and folk story.

INTO

-Begin a discussion of favorite lullabies or stories the children enjoy hearing before bedtime.

THROUGH

-Read aloud Abiyoyo .

-Write in reading logs .

-Students can be invited to hear the story several more times by listening to a cassette tape of the story.

BEYOND

-Students can learn a story, practice the art of storytelling and tell their story to the class.

-A group of students can sit in a circle and tell a story using either words or hand movements. Another group of students may stand behind the circle and do the facial expressions, gestures, and body movements to accompany the story.

-Students can make their own musical instruments out of household items and work in cooperative groups to develop a piece of music.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky by E. Dayrell

In this text, African tribesmen dress to represent the elements and the creatures of the sea illustrate the tale of how the sun and the moon came to live in the sky.

INTO

-Review or read for the first time the tale of Anansi the Spider by G. McDermott .

THROUGH

-Read aloud Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky .

-Write in reading logs .

-Compare and contrast this tale with Anansi the Spider .

BEYOND

-Make masks out of tagboard, construction paper, and any other available art supplies.

-Students can make other African crafts such as an African shield as described in C. F. Bauer's This Way to Books as a home activity.

-Write a tale about the origin of the sun or the moon .

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Darkness and the Butterfly by A. Grifalconi

Small Osa is fearless during the day, climbing trees or exploring the African valley where she lives, but at night she becomes afraid of the strange and terrifying things that might lie in the dark.

INTO

-Discuss with students things which frightened them in the past or which currently frighten them. The teacher may wish to begin the discussion by relaying a childhood fear.

THROUGH

-Read aloud Darkness and the Butterfly .

-Write in reading logs .

BEYOND

-Invite students to read aloud other A. Grifalconi books such as :

Osa's Pride and The Village of Round and Square Houses .

-In cooperative groups, students can create a mural depicting a favorite part of the story or perhaps a dream sequence of their own.

-Explore colors and textures by painting with only three colors of paint, a paintbrush, a large piece of construction paper, and paper towels to wipe off the brush. Do not use water to rinse the paintbrush. Students can create their own dream picture by experimenting with color and texture with these materials.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by J. Steptoe

This folktale describes Mufaro's, the "happy man's", two beautiful daughters. One is reminded of the traditional Cinderella-type stories when reading about the final outcome of Manyara's selfishness and her sister, Nyasha's kindness.

INTO

- Relate the story to other such tales with which the students are familiar such as Cinderella and the recent Beauty and the Beast.
- Discuss the terms fairytale and folktale.

THROUGH

- Read aloud Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters .
- Write in reading logs .

BEYOND

- Host a "Dress as your favorite folktale character day" .
- Make an Akuba doll "good luck" pendant. Draw an Akuba doll and glue it onto oaktag. Cut into three sections. Measure a thirty inch piece of yarn. Thread it through a straw. Tape the straw to the three sections of oaktag, leaving a space between sections. Tie the ends. Students can wear their pendants hung around their necks.
- Learn "Kee-Chee" song and musical hand-pat from Africa as described in the music series World of Music by Silver Burdett & Ginn .
- In pairs, students can make up their own hand-pats with or without accompanying words. They can share their hand-pats with the whole class and teach those who wish to learn.

Culminating Activity

There are several ways to celebrate the conclusion of this particular unit. To begin the day the teacher may wish to read aloud The Village of Round and Square Houses which depicts the roles of African men, women, and children in a little village. The food prepared and the games the children play are briefly discussed as well. Students may wish to spend their day of celebration singing the songs of Africa, telling African tales and playing the games they have learned throughout the unit. African dishes can be prepared in advance by the teacher and by students and their parents. Fu Fu, a West African dish discussed in the forementioned story, Peanut soup from Nigeria, and Couscous from North Africa, are some of the dishes which may be served. The recipes for these dishes can be found in the section entitled "Wonderful World of Africa & Australia" in the Macmillan Early Skills Program .

An alternative idea which may be implemented is to have a Multicultural day. Each child may dress in their traditional garb and bring a culinary dish which is representative of their native culture. Perhaps children may wish to give a brief presentation about their costume or their cultural background and the culinary treat they brought to share with classmates. Students may also wish to teach their classmates a song, dance, or game from their heritage. For lunch, everyone is invited to taste the delicacies.

Evaluation For Thematic Unit

Evaluation reveals the development of the learning, the teacher, and the curriculum and is, therefore, an integral part of the curriculum. It is necessary for the classroom community and its organization to be kept in mind when planning for evaluation of thematic units. Because the classroom community involves both students and teacher, it is important for every member of these two groups to be involved in the evaluation process. In order that evaluation be consistent with the teacher's philosophy and the way the children have been exposed to the world of learning, the process, the product, and attitudes should be evaluated. Evaluation serves several purposes. It is useful in planning and modifying units so that they will be more effective. It is also effective in assisting teachers in determining student progress and interest as well as enabling them to reflect on their own professional development as teachers.

During the course of the unit, students will be writing in their reading logs. As part of the evaluation procedure, the teacher will confer individually with the students about their writing and record some brief notes regarding the nature of their work, strengths shown in the work, and problems the student may be having. Together the student and the teacher will discuss the student's work and make decisions about improvements the writer can make and what direction can be taken next. In this way, not only will the teacher be evaluating the students, but each individual will also be conducting a self-evaluation.

The group projects on which the students work will also be evaluated through teacher observation and questions that encourage students to reflect on their completed project and think about ways they could change it or make improvements.

Anecdotal records can be kept by the teacher which include notes about interactions observed between one child and print,

between partners, between small groups of children, and during whole class activities.

Ongoing "kid-watching" is a valuable assessment tool, especially when assessing student participation and effort in music, art, drama, and physical education activities.

Review of audio cassettes or videotapes made can be helpful in determining the success of the thematic unit in its entirety as well as providing teachers with a sense of student growth, interests, and needs in other content areas.

Peer evaluation is just as important as self-evaluation. During student conferences, the students are asked to evaluate their own progress. As many activities involve partners working together or small groups, students can be asked to evaluate both their own part of a project as well as their peers. They can respond to questions such as : What was your contribution to the activity? What did my partner or partners do? What did we learn while participating in the activity/project?

AFRICAN FOLKLORE BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aardema, V. (1981) . Bringing the rain to Kapiti plain . New York : Scholastic, Inc.
- Aardema, V. (1984) . Oh, Kojo! How could you! . New York : The Trumpet Club.
- Aardema, V. (1977) . Who's in rabbits house? New York : Dial Books for Young Readers .
- Aardema, V. (1975) . Why mosquitoes buzz in people's ears . New York : Scholastic, Inc.
- Bauer, C. F. (1983) . This way to books . New York : The H. W. Wilson Company.
- Dayrell, E. (1968) . Why the sun and the moon live in the sky . New York : Scholastic, Inc.
- Feelings, M. (1974) . Moja means one - Swahili counting book . New York : Dial Books for Young Readers .
- Feelings, M. (1971) . Jambo means hello - Swahili alphabet book . New York : Dial Books for Young Readers .
- Gerson, M. (1974) . Why the sky is far away . New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
- Grifalconi, A. (1987) . Darkness and the butterfly . Boston : Little, Brown and Company .
- Grifalconi, A. (1990) . Osa's Pride . Boston : Little, Brown and Company .
- Grifalconi, A. (1986) . The village of round and square houses . Boston : Little, Brown and Company .
- Haley, G. E. (1970) . A story, a story . United States of America .
- Jenkins, E. (1974) . Jambo and other call-and-response songs and chants . Princeton, NJ : Folkways Records.
- Musgrove, M. (1976) . Ashanti to Zulu - African traditions . New York : Dial Books for Young Readers .
- Seeger, P. (1989) . Abiyoyo . New York : Scholastic, Inc.

- Palmer, M., Reilly, M. L., and Scott, C. R. (1990) . World of Music . Morristown, NJ : Silver Burdett & Ginn Inc.
- Stephoe, J. (1987) . Mufaro's beautiful daughters . New York : Scholastic, Inc.

APPENDIX C

ELEPHANTS

Rationale

Elephants once roamed in all parts of Africa. Today, they are confined to smaller and smaller areas. There are two main reasons for the dissipation of the elephant population, both of them having to do with human beings.

Poaching, the illegal killing of elephants, is one human activity that has caused the crash of elephant populations. The worst enemy of elephants today is the ivory trader. The strong and useful tusks of the elephant now threatens its existence. Many people want to buy things made from ivory, making ivory valuable. For this reason, people in Africa have killed hundreds of thousands of elephants to sell their tusks. Elephants are the oldest living land mammals. They are intelligent and adaptable, but they have no way to defend themselves against the powerful guns of poachers. Fortunately, the nations of the world have agreed to no longer buy ivory from poachers so poaching is no longer profitable.

A second reason for the shrinking number of elephants is human population growth. Because elephants are so large and eat so much, they need lots of land. However, since people have removed numerous trees from the land building homes, there has become less and less room and protection for the elephants. The national parks in Africa provide the elephants with a place to live and replenish the species.

The future of the elephant depends on man who has the power to conserve as well as to destroy. If people continue to care for these enormous pachyderms, there is a chance they will continue to survive and roam the grasslands.

The purpose of this unit is to familiarize students with the elephant and to understand the role humankind plays in an animal's continued survival and possible extinction. This elephant unit explores a variety of fictional and non-fictional books, as well as

songs, poems, and videotapes. This thematic unit has been designed so that literature is integrated across the content areas in a meaningful and understandable way. Using an integrated approach with literature as the unifying element, the children are able to assimilate their learning into their own theories of the world and thus gain a more global and unified perspective of the role elephants play in the environment.

Activities are designed to motivate and involve students in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The children are invited to participate in activities individually, with partners, in small groups, as a whole class, and with their families during home activities. The literature selections and suggested activities are not arranged in any definite order. In transformational units, it is expected that the teacher and students will collaboratively select and arrange the curriculum in the manner that best fits their varying needs and interests.

Concepts

This unit is built around the concept entitled "Diversity of Life" as drawn from the Science Framework for California public schools kindergarten through grade twelve (1990) and is centered around the following subconcepts :

1. All living things are classified according to different characteristics.
2. The African elephant is the earth's largest land-dwelling mammal.
3. Living things depend upon their environment and humankind. Humankind, especially, plays a large role in the extinction or survival of the elephant.
4. Students can learn about elephants through direct observation or indirectly through literary materials.
5. Elephants are personified throughout literature. Their human qualities exemplify cooperation, friendship, manners, family life, conflicts, and so forth.

Throughout The Unit

Reading materials such as books, magazines, and newspaper articles relating to elephants, as well as manipulative materials such as props and puppets will be available for student use throughout the unit. The particular literature choices read aloud by the teacher will also be made available to the students as will audio cassettes of these selections for students who wish to hear the stories again. All literary materials will be displayed in a specifically designated area.

Each day during the course of the unit, the students will be invited to write in their individual reading logs. Students who wish to participate may share the information they have recorded in their logs. Sharing may take place between partners, in small groups, or as a whole class.

At various times throughout the unit, students will be invited to sing the songs and recite the poems they have learned about elephants. Folders will be provided for students who wish to keep the work they have accumulated and information they have gathered in one location. At the conclusion of the unit, the students can organize their collection to make an elephant information booklet. Student projects will also be displayed on bulletin boards or other areas throughout the room.

Preparation For Thematic Unit On Elephants

Background information on the country of Africa or African animals would be beneficial to the study of elephants. Teachers may wish to implement a thematic unit on some aspect of Africa prior to engaging in this elephant unit.

It is important that the physical set-up of the classroom facilitate the implementation of the unit. By discussing the set-up of the classroom and how to use the limited space most comfortably and effectively, children will have a sense of ownership of the classroom as well as a sense of responsibility for its uses.

Flexibility of time and curricular focus is also a critical factor. Students require a great deal of time to concentrate on their reading and writing, to explore their interests, and to complete a project without interruption. Time is crucial for children to make connections and develop understandings between what they are learning and their own lives.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Elephant Crossing by T. Yoshida

Under a hot African sun, eleven elephants gather to form a herd. Great-grandmother elephant leads the herd on an adventurous journey across the plain, to the forest where many delicious leaves grow.

INTO

- Recite an elephant riddle to the class. Ask them to guess what animal you are describing. One possible selection can be found in Riddles and Rhymes by E. Fletcher.
- Brainstorm and chart what students know about elephants. The charts can be labeled : What we know about elephants, what we want to know, and what we learned. A fourth chart can indicate possible sources of information.

THROUGH

- Read aloud Elephant Crossing .
- Write in reading logs.
- Discuss the dangers to the elephant population : other animals, swarms of insects, lack of food and water, poachers, and the growing human population.

BEYOND

- Share pictures of Asiatic and African elephants in their natural habitats. Locate India and Africa on a world map. Students can determine the differences between the two types of elephants and may wish to also read books about the Asiatic breed of elephant.
- Read aloud Elephant Baby the story of Little Tembo . Compare and discuss the facts presented in this book with Elephant Crossing . Students may wish to compile and list elephant facts as a class or in cooperative groups.
- Watch the video "Elephant" by Encyclopedia Britannica Educational

Corporation. Students can construct dioramas of elephants in their natural habitat. One way to do this is to have students remove the lid from a cardboard box, and cut one side from the box for easier viewing. The box can be painted or covered with colored paper. The background setting of forests and grasslands may be cut from colored paper and pasted to the interior walls, or the scenes may be painted on these walls. Cut animal figures and scenery, like trees, bushes, or rocks, from construction paper. Each cutout should have a tab at the base that can be folded back and glued or stapled to the bottom or sides of the box. Bits of leaves, grass, or twigs may be spread on the bottom of the box to cover the tabs and give the effect of underbrush.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

The Elephant's Child by R. Kipling

Because of his insatiable curiosity about what the crocodile has for dinner, the elephant's child and all elephants thereafter have long trunks.

INTO

-Discuss the elephant's trunk and its uses. Theorize about how the students think the elephant came by his long trunk.

THROUGH

-Read aloud The Elephant's Child .

-Write in reading logs.

-Compare and contrast the story as illustrated by various artists.

BEYOND

-Choose one version of the story as a favorite based upon the illustrations. Choose materials and recreate a favorite illustration (ex. - pencil drawing).

-Watch the video version of the story. Compare and contrast to a particular literature version.

-Use clay to create elephants or other African animals as depicted in the videotape "How The Elephant Got His Trunk" by Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation.

-Write an unique version about how a particular animal could have attained a certain attribute such as how the giraffe got his long neck, how a zebra got his stripes, and so on.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

The Ant and the Elephant by B. Peet

In this delightful tale, Bill Peet humorously illustrates the friendship that develops between one of the jungles smallest creatures and its largest.

INTO

-Tell the story of "The Lion and the Mouse"

THROUGH

-Read aloud The Ant and the Elephant .

-Write in reading logs.

-Discuss the elephant's marvelous sense of hearing.

-Discuss the elephant's enormous size. Compare the elephant's size to the ant's stature.

-Learn the poem "Eletelephony" by L.E. Richards in Sing a Song of Popcorn . Discuss the origin of the title. Invite students to write their own poem.

BEYOND

-Watch the movie Horton Hears a Who . Compare this movie to The Ant and the Elephant .

-Invite students to read other books by Bill Peet including his elephant stories entitled Ella and Encore for Eleanor .

-Blindfold student volunteers and ask them to identify such sounds as paper being crumpled, water running, fingers snapping and so on. Discuss the importance of the sense of hearing.

-Use peanuts and a balance scale to (after estimating) compare the weights of objects commonly found in the classroom. Discuss the elephant as being the largest living land mammal.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Elmer by D. McKee

All the elephants of the jungle are gray in this story except Elmer, who is a patchwork of brilliant colors. One day Elmer becomes tired of being different and decides to do something about it.

INTO

- Tell the students an elephant joke. For example, "How do you know that peanuts are fattening? Have you ever seen a skinny elephant?"
- Invite students to share any elephant jokes they may know.
- Invite the students to listen to McKee's story about an elephant who likes to play games and jokes.

THROUGH

- Read aloud Elmer .
- Write in reading logs.
- Discuss the term "patchwork"

BEYOND

- Make an elephant mosaic. Use small pieces of paper to fill in an elephant drawing. Make an estimation prior to beginning the activity.
- Make a patchwork elephant as a cooperative class activity. Each student can design and color a three by three patchwork piece. The squares can then be glued or stapled to the bulletin board. The elephant can be outlined with a black marker.
- Design individual colored patchwork elephants. Mount on black construction paper.
- Experiment with primary colors to see what other colors can be created.
- Send the class on an elephant joke hunt. Compile a class list. Each student can choose one to write on paper and illustrate. Put all the

jokes together and make an elephant shaped class book for kids to read over and over. This can be a family activity also.

-Students can record their favorite jokes and write and illustrate their own joke book.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Alistair's Elephant by M. Sadler

Alistair's life is never quite the same again after the day an elephant follows him home from the zoo.

INTO

-Recite the poem "An Elephant is Hard to Hide" by J. Prelutsky in Something Big Has Been Here .

-Discuss what attributes an elephant has that makes this animal difficult to hide.

THROUGH

-Read aloud Alistair's Elephant .

-Write in reading logs.

-Discuss what it would be like to have an elephant for a pet.

-Invite students to share experiences they may have had at a zoo.

BEYOND

-Go on a field trip to a local zoo to visit the elephants and other African animals.

-Make a list of synonyms for the word large. This can be a home activity. A class book can be constructed with the results.

-Some African elephants stand eleven feet tall at the shoulder. Their ears are up to four feet wide and their tusks are as long as eight feet. Students can use chalk to measure and draw large elephants on the playground.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Horton Hatches the Egg by Dr. Seuss

Horton, the elephant, is asked to nest-sit for a lazy bird, Mayzie. He does sit through the days and nights, through fifty-one weeks in all. Mayzie abandons her egg, but lays claim to the hatched elephant bird. This book contains many zany word plays.

INTO

-Discuss the difference between mammals and birds. Mammals do not lay or hatch eggs.

THROUGH

-Read aloud Horton Hatches the Egg .

-Write in reading logs.

-Compare this story with Horton Hears a Who .

BEYOND

-Compose an elephant tale - a tall tale about an elephant. Record the stories on cassette tape as an oral language exercise.

-Bake elephant - shaped cookies. Use measurement concepts.

-Incubate and hatch chicken eggs. Record the daily information on a chart.

-Students can go to the library and select books on animals. Read them together and find out how different animals are hatched or born. This can be a school or home activity.

-Parents can relate to their child how he/she was born. (This is a family activity).

Note : The last four activities were drawn from M. L. Olsen's Creative Connections : Literature and the Reading Program .

Synopsis of the literature selection :

"Stand Back," said the Elephant, "I'm Going to Sneeze!" by P.

Thomas

Knowing the havoc it will cause, all the animals try to prevent the elephant from sneezing.

INTO

-Sing "Willoughby, Wallaby, Woo" in The Book of Kids Songs by N. & J. Cassidy.

-Discuss nonsense words.

THROUGH

-Read aloud "Stand Back," said the Elephant, "I'm Going to Sneeze!"

-Write in reading logs.

-Discuss the rhyming text and hilarious illustrations.

BEYOND

-Grow peanuts.

-Estimate how many peanuts objects weigh. Weigh each object and record the weight.

-Display an empty animal cracker box. Tell students to choose one animal and write a story or draw pictures indicating where the animal has gone. Animal crackers and milk can be served after this activity (Adapted from the Creative Teaching Press theme series Elephants).

Synopsis of the literature selection :

When the Elephant Walks by K. Kasza

When the Elephant walks he scares the bear who runs away and scares the crocodile who runs away and scares the wild hog in this never-ending animal story.

INTO

-Read aloud If You Give A Mouse A Cookie by L. J. Numeroff.
Most first graders are already familiar with this circular story.

THROUGH

- Read aloud When the Elephant Walks .
- Write in reading logs.
- Discuss "Are elephants really afraid of mice?" Graph students answers : Yes, No, Unsure. Students can be challenged to research this question to find an answer.

BEYOND

- Write a circular story depicting another African animal.
- Learn the poem, "Elephant" by M. Brown in Play Rhymes .
- Practice walking (moving) like an elephant or various other animals.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

Englebert the Elephant by T. Paxton

An elephant's dancing skills and good manners surprise everyone at the royal ball, including the queen.

INTO

-Play a minuet. Ask students to describe what they hear in the music. How does the music make them feel? What does the music make them want to do? Students may even wish to draw a picture illustrating a scene they picture in their minds when they hear this particular music.

THROUGH

- Read aloud Englebert the Elephant .
- Write in reading logs.
- Play a minuet. Invite students to dance to the music as Englebert did at the queen's ball.

BEYOND

- Invite students to read other books illustrated by Steven Kellog.
- Make a list of all the elephant books the teacher has read aloud to the class during the course of the unit. Number the list as a counting activity. Invite students to choose their favorite book from the list or they may choose an elephant story they have read independently. Individually or with a partner, students can write a short description of the book, emphasizing why other students may wish to read the story. This book invitation may be written on a three by five index card. The student may then make a mask of the story's main character and attach the index card to the back of the mask. This activity could take a great deal of time! When all students who wish have had an opportunity to make a mask and write a description of their favorite elephant book the class can have a Book Mask Fashion Show. (This idea was borrowed from C. F. Bauer's This Way To

Books resource handbook).

This activity would be a wonderful activity to videotape.

NOTE : The following is an example of a book invitation :

What would you do if an elephant followed you home? What would you feed it? Where would it sleep? Find out what one boy did when an elephant followed him home from the zoo? The book is Alistair's Elephant by Marilyn Sadler.

Synopsis of the literature selection :

The Eleventh Hour by G. Base

An elephant's eleventh birthday party is marked by eleven games preceding the banquet to be eaten at the eleventh hour, but when the time to eat arrives, the birthday feast has disappeared. The readers are invited to guess the identity of the thief.

INTO

- Discuss the terms "detective", "clues", and "mystery" .
- Invite the students to be detectives with you as you read the book.

THROUGH

- Read aloud The Eleventh Hour .
- Re-read the story being sure to encourage students to carefully study the illustrations.
- Make predictions as to the identity of the thief. Graph student responses.
- Beginning with the students' first choice, attempt to decode the message to determine the true identity of the thief. Continue until the mystery is solved.
- Review the story illustrations and try to locate the one hundred one mice the author has hidden in the picture. Several copies of the book would be beneficial to this activity.

BEYOND

- Students can make up their own secret codes with a partner and write one another messages.
- Students may wish to play one of the eleven games mentioned in the story. For example, musical chairs, blind man's bluff, or hide and seek.
- Students can use Graeme Base's method of creating illustrations in which a particular animal or object is hidden somewhere in the picture. They can exchange pictures with a partner and try to find

the hidden object or animal.

Culminating Activity

A field trip to the zoo or wild animal park would be ideal as a culmination to the study of elephants. However, since this idea is not always feasible due to time and money constraints, the Book Mask Fashion Show can also be scheduled on the final day . In this way, the unit can be extended even further. Students will be encouraged to perhaps take a trip to their local library to check out some of the other titles they have not yet read. The fashion show can also be performed for other classes or for the entire school to motivate and encourage other students to read.

The day before this event, students can be invited to bring enough of their their favorite form of peanuts for their classmates to each have a sample. For example, they may wish to bring original roasted and salted peanuts, honey roasted peanuts, unsalted peanuts, chocolate covered peanuts and so on. Those students who do not like peanuts may bring another type of nut or a snack of their choice. The teacher can bring toasted peanuts in the shell, peanut oil, salt, and a blender. The students can all help to shell the peanuts. These ingredients can then be mixed in a blender to make peanut butter. Students can use elephant-shaped cookie cutters to shape their bread. The homemade peanut butter and jam or honey can be spread on the bread for students to taste and enjoy.

Evaluation For Thematic Unit

Evaluation reveals the development of the learning, the teacher, and the curriculum and is, therefore, an integral part of the curriculum. It is necessary for the classroom community and its organization to be kept in mind when planning for evaluation of thematic units. Because the classroom community involves both students and teach, it is important for every member of these two groups to be involved in the evaluation process. In order that evaluation be consistent with the teacher's philosophy and the way the children have been exposed to the world of learning, the process, the product, and attitudes should be evaluated. Evaluation serves several purposes. It is useful in planning and modifying units so that they will be more effective. It is also effective in assisting teachers in determining student progress and interest as well as enabling them t reflect on their own professional development as teachers.

During the course of the unit, students will be writing in their reading logs. As part of the evaluation procedure, the teacher will confer individually with the students about their writing and record some brief notes regarding the nature of their work, strengths shown in the work, and problems the student may be having. Together the student and the teacher will discuss the student's work and make decisions about improvements the writer can make and what direction can next be pursued. In this way, not only will the teacher be evaluating the students, but each individual will also be conduction a self-evaluation.

The group projects on which the students work will also be evaluated through teacher observation and questions that encourage students to reflect on their completed project and think about ways they could change it or make improvements.

Anecdotal records can be kept by the teacher which include notes about interactions observed between one child and print,

between partners, between small groups of children, and during whole class activities.

Ongoing "kid-watching" is a valuable assessment tool, especially when assessing student participation and effort in music, art, drama, and physical education activities.

Review of audio cassettes or videotapes made can be helpful in determining the success of the thematic unit in its entirety as well as providing teachers with a sense of student growth, interests, and needs in other content areas.

Peer evaluation is just as important as self-evaluation. During student conferences, the students are asked to evaluate their own progress. As many activities involve partners working together or small groups, students can be asked to evaluate both their own part of a project as well as their peers. They can respond to questions such as : What was your contribution to the activity? What did my partner or partners do? What did we learn while participating in the activity/project?

ELEPHANT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bauer, C. F. (1983) . This way to books . New York : The H. W. Wilson Company.
- Fletcher, E. (1990) . Riddles and Rhymes . Newmarket, England : Brimax Books, Ltd.
- Jones, C. & Giesil, T. (Producers) . (1970) . Horton hears a who! [Videotape] . Culver City, CA : Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Inc.
- Kipling, R. (1983) . The elephant's child . New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers.
- McKee, D. (1968) . Elmer . New York : Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books.
- Mc Govern, A. (1982) . Elephant baby : The story of Little Tembo. New York : Scholastic, Inc.
- Numeroff, L. J. (1985). If you give a mouse a cookie . New York : Scholastic, Inc.
- Olsen, M. L. (1987) . Creative connections . Littleton, Colorado : Libraries Unlimited, Inc.
- Peet, B. (1964) . Ella . Boston : Houghton Mifflin Company .
- Peet, B. (1981) . Encore for Eleanor . Boston : Houghton Mifflin Company .
- Peet, B. (1972) . The ant and the elephant . Boston : Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Prelutsky, J. (1990) . Something big has been here . New York : Greenwillow Books.
- Richards, L. E. (1988) . "Eletelephony" in Sing a song of popcorn . New York : Scholastic, Inc.
- Sadler, M. (1983) . Alistair's elephant . New Jersey : Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Seuss, Dr. (1954) . Horton hears a who! New York : Random House .
- Seuss, Dr. (1940) . Horton hatches the egg . New York : Random

House .
Yoshida, T. (1984) . Elephant crossing . New York : Philomel
Books .