

A THEMATIC LITERATURE UNIT:
DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING
OF CULTURE , CULTURAL IDENTITY, AND
DIVERSE CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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CHARLOTTE BARRINGTON



A THEMATIC LITERATURE UNIT:
DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING
OF CULTURE, CULTURAL IDENTITY,
AND DIVERSE CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

by

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Abstract

In a fast paced technological world, global and multicultural issues are in the forefront of every day life. Children need to develop a more global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others. This project explores the use of children's literature to develop the concepts of culture, cultural awareness, cultural identity, and diverse cultural perspectives. A thematic literature unit suitable for eleven to fourteen year olds has been designed to enable children to explore these concepts by reading and responding to a variety of children's literature. The literature serves as a springboard for discussion of these concepts and helps children look at themselves and others in new ways. In this project, the writer describes the process of designing a thematic literature unit with the goal of developing children's global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others. This includes the selection of learning outcomes, learning resources, learning experiences and the development of assessment and evaluation tools. Then a framework has been developed to demonstrate the implementation of this thematic literature unit in an elementary classroom.

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

Background of Project

In a fast paced technological world, global and multicultural issues are in the forefront of every day life. As the world becomes more of a global community, Canada, like many other countries is concerned about the Americanization of its culture through television programs, advertising and films. However, Canada also has its share of cultural problems within its boundaries, for example, racial unrest in schools in Halifax, Nova Scotia; the aboriginal land claims issues in Newfoundland and Labrador; and Quebec's ongoing discussion of a distinct society. The future generation should be prepared to deal with such complex issues. In this regard, educators need to ask the following questions: Are schools developing children's cultural awareness and a sense of cultural identity? Do children have the opportunity to explore diverse cultural perspectives?, and Does today's curriculum allow children to explore their feelings and reactions to diverse cultural groups?

The writer has formulated these questions and others related to cultural awareness, identity and diverse perspectives after listening to and contemplating the thinking of children. The children, even at a very young age, are thinking of similarities and differences between cultural groups. For example, after several months of playing with a non-English speaking Egyptian child, a three year-old Caucasian boy made the comment that his friend was learning English but had not started to turn white yet. This statement illustrates that this child had acknowledged the differences between himself and his friend, but was struggling with the idea that his friend was not becoming like him in all

respects. Children need the opportunity to explore these ideas more fully. A second example gives insight into how one first generation Canadian child feels about her heritage. A mother of an eleven-year-old, Chinese Canadian claimed that her daughter had commented frequently that she was ashamed of her dark black hair, her dark complexion and the ways of her family. She wished she could be more like her Canadian friends. This child needs an opportunity to explore these feelings about her cultural identity and realize that her heritage is an important part of being Canadian.

These are only two examples of how important it is for the schools to address the cultural issues in society. How do children with different cultural backgrounds feel as they work with the curriculum and resources in our schools? What are the schools doing to develop an understanding in all children of parallel cultures? Children need a forum for discussing the similarities and differences between cultural groups so they can develop an understanding of the concept of culture and cultural identity. Rigoberta Menchu (1984) claims "that as we understand the cultural diversity of people, we value more what we have, not because it's unique, but because it's something we own, something that identifies us with our roots" (as cited in Schumaker, 1993, p. 3). Children also need to think about other points of view and realize that different cultural groups may look at events from diverse perspectives.

Statement of the Problem

Until recently, the majority of classes in the Newfoundland and Labrador schools have been ethnically homogenous. The children and teachers have been for the most part, English speaking Canadians, with an Anglo - European heritage. For this majority,

multiculturalism has not been an issue, as the children and teachers have not come across many different cultures in their every day lives. The curriculum in the majority of schools has reflected this Caucasian, English Canadian heritage through the content of the textbooks and resources that has been chosen for use in the classroom. Children from parallel cultures have not been recognized or reflected in the curriculum. Although new textbooks and resource materials now include stories and pictures of people from different cultural backgrounds, they are not sufficient to develop children's cultural awareness, identity and the idea of diverse perspectives. Units of work that deal with other cultural groups often portray culture as something alien and exotic. The emphasis is on food, festivals and fun, not on the every day life of a people who are very similar in many ways to the children in the class. The children do not get the opportunity to discuss openly their feelings and experiences of other cultural groups and their own cultural identity. Teachers feel they have covered multiculturalism if they have had a celebration or a concert showing the different costumes or customs of a cultural group. In many cases, these activities only contribute to the stereotypes and prejudice already prevalent in society today.

Our present curriculum does not give children a true picture of Canada today or yesterday. Canada is composed of a diverse heritage. It is a nation built by people from many cultural backgrounds. The children in many Newfoundland and Labrador classrooms reflect this phenomenon. There are many Inuit and Innu children, second and third generation Chinese, Japanese, African, Indian, French Canadian children, as well as children who have emigrated recently from countries such as Bulgaria, Vietnam, China,

Japan, Hong Kong and Norway. These children are Canadians but they have very different cultural backgrounds. English is their second language and they bring to school a variety of beliefs and attitudes. The schools should address the needs of these children and prepare all children to be aware of different cultural perspectives and beliefs of the Canadians who live next-door to them. The schools need to prepare children to live and work together in an increasingly multicultural society.

The National Council for Social Studies (1992) gives three reasons why multicultural education is necessary.

First, ethnic pluralism is a growing reality that is influencing our lives. Second, we all acquire knowledge and beliefs about ethnic and cultural groups, some of which might be erroneous. Third, some knowledge and beliefs may limit one's perspective and negatively impact opportunities made available to members of a particular ethnic or cultural group. (p. 275)

It is not acceptable to provide children with one view of the world. They need to explore the cultural diversity of the world. Rothlein and Meinbach (1996) state:

As we approach the twenty-first century, children need to develop a world view that appreciates the richness of other cultures while at the same time preserving and celebrating their uniqueness. Children need to be provided with resources that allow for exploration and understanding of various people living within and outside our borders. (p. 246)

Children should have the opportunity to reflect and respond to a variety of beliefs and perspectives so they can realize their cultural identities are important and something of which to be proud. Banks (1993) claims:

Schools should be a cultural environment in which acculturation takes place: teachers and students should assimilate some of the views, perspectives and ethos of each other as they interact. Teachers and students will be enriched by this process, and the academic achievement of students from diverse groups will be enhanced because their perspectives will be legitimized in the school. (p.25)

Jobe (1993) maintains that children today need to have the following qualities:

- A high degree of cultural awareness.
- Multilingual with a desire to read books in several languages.
- Sensitive and accepting to others.
- Discriminating consumers in the mass markets of the world. (p.14)

Daily, children are watching programs on television from many places. They can communicate through the Internet with people in any country and many of them have the opportunity to travel around the world. Therefore more than ever before, schools need to develop these qualities so that the children can function in a global community.

It is also important to foster the desire to learn another language so that all Canadian children want to be multilingual. The children immigrating to Canada will also learn English or French more quickly if they develop a sense of Canadian identity. Crawford-Lange and Lange (1987) claim, "Foreign language educators have long accepted intellectually that language and culture are essentially inseparable" (p.258). In order to embrace a language and become bilingual, a person must feel that he/she wants to belong in some part to the culture of that language. A positive regard for the culture associated with the language helps in second language acquisition (Snow, 1992). Often children ask why they need to learn a second language. Perhaps, with a greater understanding of the people who speak the target language, their motivation for learning a second language will increase. Equally important for second language learning is to give children an opportunity to examine their own cultural beliefs and develop a strong sense of their own cultural identity.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to design a four- to six-week thematic literature unit for 11-14 year olds that gives children an opportunity to develop a more global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others. Through reading and responding to a wide range of children's literature, concepts such as culture, cultural awareness, cultural identity, cultural and diverse perspectives would be explored. This unit is not designed to give information about specific cultural groups. Through reading and responding to a wide range of children's literature, children look beyond the superficial differences of cultures and begin to understand how all people have the same needs but may view the world in a different way. A good story lets you know people as individuals, all their particularity and problems; and once you see how someone lives and feels you have reached beyond stereotype (Bosma, 1995).

Definition of Key Terms

This thematic literature unit deals with many concepts that can be defined in different ways. For the purpose of this project, the writer, by referring to Webster's Dictionary (1984), Dictionary of Psychology (1995) and information from researchers defines the key terms as follows:

Culture:

A unique set of customs, languages, religious beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors shared by a group of people passed on from generation to generation. These collective beliefs and values provide members with a sense of identity. It also implies communication and a means to communicate, because it is only through the transmission of a group's culture that a sense of group and tradition evolves. (Jobe, 1993, p.13)

Cultural Awareness:

A state of being conscious of the meaning culture; a realization of the impact of a person's physical and social environment on one's beliefs and values.

Cultural Identity:

A person's self concept in terms of the culture to which one belongs, how one views oneself in the light of this culture and the world around him/her.

Cultural Perspective:

A way of viewing a situation from the point of view of one's own beliefs and values.

Diverse Perspectives:

The ability to see other points of view and the realization that there are different ways of interpreting the world.

Multicultural Literature:

Any literature that can offer children "a cultural experience that extends and enriches their lives" (Jobe, 1993, p.11). It raises children's awareness and gives them a better understanding of themselves and others.

Summary

Educators should no longer be satisfied to implement a curriculum that does not reflect the needs, heritage and culture of all children in the school system. With increasing evidence that the world is rapidly becoming a global community, it is the responsibility of educators to deliver a curriculum in which children develop an understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others. The concepts of

culture, cultural awareness, cultural identity and cultural and diverse perspectives need to be developed over time and in many different ways.

The purpose of this project is to design a curriculum development and implementation framework for a unit that would develop children's global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others. It is a culmination of research, reflection and experience in the classroom. It is an attempt to meet the needs of elementary children by giving them an opportunity to reflect on how they feel about themselves and others. Through an exploration of a wide range of literature, they would realize that all people have similar needs and wants but there are many ways of viewing the world.

CHAPTER II- REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

An effective and purposeful thematic literature unit should be built on a foundation of the latest research. This chapter describes the background necessary to design such a unit. In this regard, the following areas are reviewed: development and implementation of a thematic literature unit; the value of children's literature; and reader response.

Development of a Thematic Literature Unit

Definition

When designing a curriculum unit it is important to understand the underlying principles of a unit. Today there are many different ways of organizing learning experiences for children. Lemlech (1998) defines a unit as, "A plan that organizes ideas and knowledge into a meaningful structure for teaching purposes. It should provide integrative experiences to satisfy students' needs and to develop understanding, values and skills" (p.168). The principle aim of a unit is to give learners an opportunity to discover relationships and patterns that go beyond a specific discipline and help students visualize connections between different aspects of the world (Borich, 1998). Recent research (Aschbacher, 1991; Shavelson and Baxter, 1992; Richmond and Striley, 1994) demonstrates that a curriculum unit containing integrated subjects and involving students in problem solving, interactive learning, critical thinking, and independent thought and action can lead to high levels of thinking and meaningful learning (Borich, 1998, p. 194).

A thematic unit does more than link ideas and learning experiences to a specific topic. A theme offers a principle or a generalization about the human condition. By focusing on a theme, children develop complex webs of related ideas (Peters, 1995). Donhan van

Deusen and Brandt (1997) claim, "Thematic units consider the complexity of life situations in a way topical units may not; they cause students to focus attention on the "big ideas" in their literature, moving them beyond literal comprehension to inferential thinking" (p.24). An effective thematic unit is based on current research and best practice of teaching and learning: The thematic unit takes the position of the constructivist approach to learning. New information becomes meaningful as it is connected and integrated into existing schemata (Donham van Deusen and Brandt, 1997).

A thematic literature unit uses genuine, unabridged literature for the content of the unit. Children explore and respond to a variety of literature related to the theme under investigation. This type of unit has the opportunity to move children toward high-order thinking skills such as analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating. as children read and respond to central ideas in literary works (Donhan van Deusen and Brandt, 1997).

Structure of a Thematic Literature Unit

A thematic literature unit consists of a variety of instructional strategies based on the principles of teaching and learning. Through a thematic unit, Borich (1998) claims the teacher, as a facilitator of learning, can achieve the following objectives:

1. Emphasize that the learning process is sometimes more effective as an interconnected whole rather fragmented into a series of isolated subjects.
2. Encourage the students to work together in partnerships and small groups that emphasize the importance of cooperation and the social values of learning.
3. Teach students to be independent thinkers and problem solvers.
4. Help students to develop their own learning styles and individual interests.

5. Assist students to discover what they need to know and what they need to learn rather than always expecting the curriculum to teach it to them (p.196).

A thematic unit consists of the weaving together of different ideas and subject matter, giving children an opportunity to explore and reflect on them in a variety of ways.

There is no prescribed formula for developing a thematic literature unit, due to the nature of its open-ended direction, and flexibility of content. Strong's (1996) six-step curriculum development framework is useful during the design stage. A description of each step follows.

Step 1: Identify Goal(s).

The teacher chooses a goal(s) for the unit related to the needs of the children and by referring to the appropriate curriculum guides. He/she asks the question: What do I want the children to learn?

Step 2: Identify Knowledge (Concepts), Values, Skills and Strategies.

The concepts and ideas contained in the goal(s) are clarified by defining terms, and linking concepts and ideas. This step also involves identifying the values, skills and strategies related to the goal(s).

Step 3: Select Learning Outcomes.

The Knowledge (concepts), values, skills and strategies identified for the unit are stated as learning outcomes. These learning outcomes often reflect the expectations outlined in the curriculum guides.

Step 4: Select Learning Resources.

The teacher selects the learning resources required for the unit. In many cases, this depends on the availability and appropriateness of the learning resources for the age group in mind. This involves using criteria to evaluate their quality and suitability.

Step 5: Create learning experiences.

The teacher designs learning experiences by bringing together the learning outcomes and learning resources. These learning experiences reflect the principles of teaching and learning to ensure the children are actively involved in the learning process.

Step 6: Develop Assessment Tools.

The teacher chooses the assessment tools to determine whether the learning outcomes have been realized. These assessment tools reflect the student-centered nature of the unit, and provide the children, teacher and parent with information on the learning that has taken place during the unit.

When designing a thematic literature unit, a webbing development plan can help the teacher see connections between the main ideas in the theme. Borich (1998) describes a webbing development plan as, "a nonlinear system that graphically shows patterns and relationships" (p.177). The web can pictorially demonstrate how concepts, learning experiences, and different subject areas are connected in the exploration of a theme.

Implementation of a Thematic Literature Unit

When implementing a thematic literature unit, teachers need to keep in mind the principles of learning and teaching. It is stated in the 1997 draft copy of the *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Social Studies Curriculum Document* (Dept. of Education, 1997)

that these principles are "intended to guide and support decisions relating to the learning and teaching process including curriculum and instruction, classroom organization, and assessment" (p.45). These principles are summarized as follows:

Learning

- Children learn through different modes and at individual rates. Children learn more easily when instruction complements their learning styles.
- Children benefit intellectually and socially from a variety of learning experiences that include both independent and collaborative investigation.
- Children learn most effectively in an active learning environment consisting of processes such as: exploration, investigation, critical and creative thinking, problem solving, discussion and debate, decision-making, and reflection.
- Effective curriculum units cultivate children's ability to understand the views of others and to reflect on information and ideas from a variety of perspectives. Children who can view the world through the eyes of others are able to respond to issues not only with knowledge but, with empathy. (p.45-46)

Teaching

- Teachers need to ensure that the principles of learning are the foundation of a curriculum unit.
- Effective teaching combines and integrates ideas, concepts and activities from a variety of disciplines and links them to the children's previous experiences and knowledge.

- Effective teaching encourages children to look at diverse perspectives, respect other points of view, be sensitive to cultural similarities and differences, and have a commitment to social responsibility.
- In an effective learning environment teachers encourage and support all children to be active participants in a community of learners. Teachers encourage talk, collaboration, debate, reflection, application and action, as children construct and integrate new meaning with previous understandings. (p.45-46)

A thematic literature unit that is in keeping with these important principles enables children to be active participants in the learning process and therefore meets the needs and learning styles of all children in the class.

Curriculum Implementation Framework

Lemlech's (1998) three-stage structure, the initiation, developmental activities and the culmination for the purpose of this project is used as an implementation framework (p. 269). A description of each stage follows.

1. The Initiation Stage:

In this stage, the teacher introduces the theme, generalization and guiding question. The purpose of this stage is to stimulate inquiry and discover what the children already know about the theme and what they need to learn. Traver (1998) claims that an effective theme should have a good guiding question. He defines it as, "The fundamental query that directs the search for understanding" (p.70). All learning experiences are designed to help answer it. Traver claims good guiding questions:

- Are open ended yet focus inquiry on a specific topic.

- Are non-judgmental, but answering them, requires high level, cognitive work, such as the development of a rich description, model, evaluation, or judgement. More questions have to be asked, in order to answer it. They may be answered in multiple ways.
- Contain emotive force and intellectual bite.
- Are succinct. They contain only a handful of words, yet they demand a lot. (p. 71)

2. Developmental Activities Stage:

This stage consists of learning experiences that give children an opportunity to branch out, explore and link the underlying concepts of the theme in different ways. They go back into the text (intra-textual), compare information in two or more texts (inter-textual) and link information in texts to personal experience (lived-textual). Through these learning experiences, children reflect on ideas, link new knowledge to previous knowledge and construct new knowledge. The teacher selects appropriate learning experiences that achieve the learning outcomes, stimulate thinking, appeal to the children's interests and suit varied learning styles. These experiences are designed in ways so children compare and contrast concepts in the literature they read (Donham van Deusen et al., 1997). They are then linked directly to the concepts and guiding questions introduced in the initiation stage.

3. Culmination Stage:

The last stage of the unit consists of learning experiences that bring together the concepts and key questions explored throughout the unit. It helps the teacher and children evaluate and reflect on what has been learned through the exploration of the theme.

Classroom Organization

An ideal way to ensure the children are engaged in active learning is the use of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning involves children in heterogeneous, small group classroom activities. The tasks are designed to encourage positive interdependence among the group as they work toward achieving a goal. It encourages productive interaction among children and helps to develop better interpersonal skills. Cooperative learning brings together the cognitive domain (knowledge) and the affective domain (feelings) as children work together to complete a task (Slavin, 1990). Many cooperative learning structures have been developed. For the purpose of this project, two of the more simple structures are described.

The first cooperative learning structure is called Roundtable (Kagan, 1990). It can be used for brainstorming, sharing ideas, making lists or completing charts. Children are grouped in heterogeneous teams of three or four. Each group has a marker or pencil and a piece of paper or a chart. Each child takes a turn adding things. In this way, everyone makes a contribution.

The second structure Think-Pair-Share (Lyman, 1992) can improve participation and interest in class discussions. It consists of three phases. 1. Think Phase. The teacher poses a question. Each child attempts to answer it individually. 2. Pair Phase. After a given time, they pair up with a partner, and compare ideas. 3. Share Phase. The partners share their responses with the small or whole group. This structure allows a child to crystallize a personal response before sharing it with a group. This process is in keeping with the principles of reader response.

Evaluation

An important part of a thematic literature unit is an effective way to assess and evaluate whether children have achieved the learning outcomes of the unit. Many of the activities accommodate individual learning styles and modes and encourage group as well as individual learning activities. How can a teacher determine whether each child has accomplished what was stated in the learning outcomes? The first step is to clarify the difference between assessment and evaluation. The *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum Document* (Department of Education, 1997) defines them in the following way. Assessment is, "the process of gathering information on student learning", while evaluation is, "the process of analysing, reflecting upon, and summarizing assessment information, and making judgements and/or decisions based on the information collected"(p.185). An effective thematic unit has a variety of tools by which the teacher can record and collect information that is useful in determining whether the learning outcomes have been met. The assessment and evaluation practices used need to reflect the principles of teaching and learning discussed earlier.

The *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum Document* (Department of Education, 1997) states:

School teachers are encouraged to use assessment and evaluation practices that are consistent with student-centered instructional practices, for example,

- Designing assessment tasks that help students make judgements about their own learning and performance
- Designing assessment tasks that incorporate varying learning styles
- Individualizing assessment tasks as appropriate to accommodate students' particular learning needs
- Negotiating and making explicit the criteria by which performance will be evaluated

- Providing feedback on student learning and performance on a regular basis. (p.185-186)

Portfolios are consistent with student-centered instructional practices. They are a collection of classroom work, selected by the child to demonstrate his/her cognitive and affective growth. This collection provides a way for the child, teacher and parent to assess and evaluate progress. Portfolios give children control over their learning. By keeping portfolios, children take an active part in goal setting, decision-making and assessing strengths and needs. Children learn to examine their work and participate in the entire learning process. The process of putting portfolios together is an example of reflection in action. Reflection in action is the process of constantly identifying things that need improvement and searching for ways to bring about improvement. Some ways are acted on immediately as they happen, others require more time for reflection between events (Schon, 1983). This type of assessment is process bound. It focuses on abilities in addition to products and gives information on habits, preferences and decision making of the child as he/she produces something (Graves and Sunstein, 1992).

Through a child's portfolio, a teacher not only learns what kind of reader or writer he/she is but also gains insight into the thinking that generates written products. This thinking is reflected in how a child orders his/her work; develops polished pieces of writing; keeps notes, logs and journals; and organizes and label his/her portfolios (Graves and Sunstein, 1992). The teacher can look at each child more closely. As the teacher gains insight into the child's needs and interests, he/she can help them grow in new directions.

Parents also can benefit from this type of assessment. When either the teacher or the child shares his/her portfolio with them, it gives them a profile of their child as a reader, writer, organizer and decision-maker. It is a reflection of not only what he/she has learned but the way the child learns. It gives meaning to the grades and anecdotal comments on a report card. The parents have the opportunity to give feedback, and therefore become an essential part of the assessment process.

The Value of Children's Literature

The value of children's literature in developing children's global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others should not be underestimated. Literature provides children not only with enjoyment but it enriches their lives. It stimulates their imagination and helps them look at situations, people and life experiences in new ways. Through good books, children can vicariously experience other places or learn about things they have never come across in their own lives. Children's literature provides children with a window to the world through which they can find adventure, excitement and sometimes conflict. They gain insight into other people's feelings, and discover what life is like in a particular time or place. Huck, Hepler, Hickman and Kiefer (1997) summarize these ideas in the following statement:

Literature can show children how others have lived and "become," no matter what the time or place. As children gain increased awareness of the lives of others, as they vicariously try out other roles, they may develop a better understanding of themselves and those around them. (p. 11)

Through literature, children learn to explore their opinions and ideas about other people and consider other perspectives. They develop a better understanding of themselves as they link what they read to their own life experiences. Langer (1995) states, "Such

literacy fosters the personal empowerment that results when people use their literacy skills to think and rethink their understandings of texts, themselves, and the world" (p.1).

In the light of this discussion, it is evident children's literature can play a role in helping a child become a 'multicultural' person. Gudykunst and Kim (1984) describe the multicultural person as, "one who possesses an intellectual and emotional commitment to the fundamental unity of all humans, and at the same time, accepts and appreciates the differences between people of different cultures" (p.230). Today, children's literature, in particular realistic and historical fiction, is beginning to reflect the multicultural nature of society. For example, Winners (Collura) tells the story of a boy adjusting to life on a reservation after living in a *White* world; Dogsong (Paulsen) is about a boy who learns about the traditional way of life from an old man in the community and finds his identity. Until quite recently in the history of English language, the only children portrayed in children's literature were those of white, European descent. Children of parallel cultures were virtually invisible or portrayed as stereotypes or objects of ridicule. Only in the past quarter century has children's literature from the major publications begun to include children of different cultural backgrounds in a positive way (Yokota, 1993).

In the last decade of the Twentieth Century, educators have begun to recognize the harmful effects of not representing all the multicultural aspects of society in children's literature. Bishop (1994) states, "Literature is one of the vehicles through which we as adults transmit to children our values, our attitudes, our mores, our world views, our philosophies of life" (p.xiii). What message is sent to children who are not visible in any literature? As Bishop (1994) claims, "White middle class children, who see their own

reflections almost exclusively, get the message that they are inherently superior, their culture and way of life is the norm, and that people and cultures different than them and theirs are quaint and exotic at best, and deviant and inferior at worst" (p.xiv).

As teachers face more culturally diverse classrooms, they need to search for ways of helping children reflect on their attitudes and beliefs about themselves and other people. The learning resources and instructional methodologies used across the curriculum should reflect the global community. Teachers need to realize the gap between the curriculum resources and the reality of the children's everyday lives. All children need to see themselves reflected in what they read and discuss in school, as well as have the opportunity to reflect on other cultural perspectives.

What can teachers use to develop in children a global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others? Hansen-Krening (1992) states, "For decades experienced educators have reported success stories about using children's literature to broaden attitudes toward people from a variety of cultures "(p.126). Perhaps, through literature, the children can develop cultural awareness, cultural identity and an understanding of diverse perspectives. Rudine Sims Bishop (as cited in Miklos 1995/1996) maintains, "Multicultural literature can be the vehicle for children's understanding of diversity"(p.2). She also says, "Children's literature can show readers how they are connected to one another through common emotions, needs and desires, while also helping them understand the differences that lie between people of different cultures"(p. 8). Palmer, Davis and Smith (1992) state,

In order for students to become sensitive to cultural differences, teachers must find ways to facilitate tolerance, respect, and concern for different ethnic groups

in society. Using children's literature offers a valuable option for teaching important concepts, generalizations, skills and values that students need to cope with people that maybe different from themselves. A judicious selection of children's literature helps young readers to recognize similarities and differences among various peoples and cultures, and offers students an alternative way of analyzing attitudes, values and beliefs. (p. 235)

Educators have long realized the potential of multicultural literature for promoting cultural awareness (McGowan, Erikson & Neufeld 1996). Through reading and responding to multicultural literature, children emerge with a greater sensitivity to the needs of others and recognize that people have similarities as well as differences (Norton 1990). Barnes (1991) agrees with this idea and claims, "Literacy encounters help children ... feel what others feel. This heightens their sensitivity to people and expands their awareness of human options" (p. 18). Rasinki and Padak (1990) summarize these ideas in the following statement:

We believe that children's literature can be a powerful way for children to learn about and to learn to appreciate other cultures. Literature presents readers with new worlds, new ideas, new options - stuff to reflect upon and to use to better themselves as people as well as readers. In the context of an environment that promotes interpersonal caring, the development of prosocial behaviours and attitudes, selflessness, and citizenship, teachers and children can use literature to explore and act upon their cultural values and beliefs. (p. 576)

Mary Ann Tighe (1994) lists five reasons for incorporating multicultural literature into our classrooms.

1. Literature reflects our increasingly diverse population.

As society becomes more culturally diverse, the schools must provide students with learning experiences, which reflect their cultural backgrounds. More than ever

before children need to develop their cultural identity. The literature that children hear as read-alouds or read themselves should mirror the society in which they live.

2. Literature helps diverse groups to develop appreciation and tolerance for others.

Culturally conscious literature can be invaluable in the social development of the child. It offers opportunities for children to learn and recognize our similarities, value our differences and respect our common humanness (Bishop, 1994). They learn to recognize new and sometimes unpleasant experiences by gaining new knowledge and different perspectives by reading about characters in novels, also having similar difficulties. Intolerance is the inability to put oneself in the place of another. Books can help us live vicariously how others live. When we learn tolerance, we are free (Deardon, 1994).

3. Literature raises the self-esteem of various ethnic groups.

All children need to see themselves reflected in the books they read. Books should contain stories and events that are relevant to children from all ethnic backgrounds. It is essential that schools provide students with reading materials that reflect their cultural background. Children need to learn about things that are relevant to them and have experiences in books with which they can identify.

4. Literature encourages engagement with literature, which encourages thinking skills.

Critical thinking skills are developed as children look at the world from different perspectives. They have an opportunity to compare and contrast their cultural values, beliefs and attitudes with others.

5. Literature, which is worthy of study, has been omitted from our classrooms.

Previously novels selected for classroom study or for the school library have reflected the 'White Anglophone' point of view. There has been an abundance of novels written about different cultural groups in Canada as well as an increased interest in translating books from all over the world into a variety of languages. Educators need to broaden their horizons when in search for quality children's literature to use in the classroom. (p. 3)

These five reasons demonstrate how important it is to select a variety of reading materials for the classroom. Children need literature that serves as a window into lives and experiences different from their own, and, as a mirror reflecting their cultural values, attitudes and behaviours. (Bishop, 1994, p.xiv)

Recently researchers have investigated the use of children's literature to enhance children's cultural awareness. Wham, Barnhart and Cook (1996) conducted a study called *Enhancing Multicultural Awareness through the Storybook Reading Experience*. Its purpose was to examine the effects of combining home and classroom reading experiences of multicultural storybooks on the awareness and attitudes of kindergarten, second grade, and fourth-grade children towards individuals representing other cultures, circumstances or lifestyles. They concluded, "It seems appropriate to suggest that multicultural literature may be a potent factor in moving students to broader levels of awareness and understanding of diverse groups" (p.6).

Science fiction can also play a role in developing children's global understanding, acceptance, and knowledge of themselves and others. Although it does not portray accurately how people live and cannot give knowledge of specific cultural groups, it

gives the reader insight into how people have similar needs and wants no matter where they live. By first taking children out of their own world and examining future worlds, they may look at themselves and others in a new way. Aïex (1994) states, "Science fiction can enable children to gain new ways of viewing the world and its possible futures" (p.2). Science fiction can help children to question intelligently by stimulating the imagination and thus motivating them to learn. (Ontell, 1997). Colville (1992) maintains, " Science fiction is the literature of possibility, a stimulant for the imagination unlike any other branch of fiction" (p.20). He claims, "Science fiction provides an enticing way for students to practice thinking as others. a skill that can only be increasingly valuable as we interact more and more with other cultures" (p.22). By exploring future worlds, they read about adapting to alien environments and getting along with different kinds of people. This takes the exploration of culture, cultural awareness, cultural identity and diverse perspectives away from reality and gives a comfort level to discussing topics such as prejudice and discrimination. With this insight, children can link these ideas to their own and other worlds, explore their attitudes and beliefs and discuss openly their feelings about similarities and differences between their themselves and others.

Reader Response

If teachers are going to use children's literature in the classroom to develop children's cultural awareness, cultural identity and diverse cultural perspectives, it is important to reflect on what happens when a reader interacts with the literature. Researchers have been interested over the last fifty years with the interaction between the text and the reader.

What happens when someone reads a book, poem or short story? In the past, reading was perceived as a passive act in which the reader absorbed the content of the text. Louise Rosenblatt (1976) maintains that reading is not a passive act. A transaction takes place between the reader and the text. During reading, the reader rejects or selects ideas and images, making associations, and deriving meaning from the text based on personal experiences. Reading falls on a continuum between the efferent or informational experience and the aesthetic or emotional experience. Usually reading is a mixture of both. Each person responds differently to the same text because he/she brings to the reading experience a different background of information. Rosenblatt states:

The reader brings to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition ... These and many other elements, interacting with the peculiar contribution of the work of art, produce a unique experience. (p.37)

Probst (1990) writes,

Rosenblatt suggests that reading is a process of creating rather than simply receiving. It is active, not passive. And it requires readers, not only to attend to what is on the page, but also what they have brought with them to that page. (p.29)

Each child brings to the reading experience his/her own set of attitudes, beliefs and past experiences. He/she needs to explore the ideas in the text from this personal perspective. This perhaps is what makes literature so powerful. Through literature, children vicariously share the emotions and dreams of other human beings. They can gain a deeper understanding of problems of other people living in a different time or environment and then relate it to their personal experiences and beliefs. If children are

going to connect their lives to what they read, they need time to respond and reflect on what they read in a non-threatening environment. Rosenblatt claims:

The student needs to be given the opportunity and the courage to approach literature personally, to let it mean something to him directly ... He should be made to feel that his own response to books, even though it may not seem to resemble the standard critical comments is worth expressing. (p.81)

Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) states, "Louise Rosenblatt told us fifty years ago that the education of citizens of democracy must include attention to the heart as well as the head, the soul as well as the mind" (p.10).

Rosenblatt's transactional theory has important implications for the teacher. Robert Probst (1990) outlines her seven principles in his article. *Literature as Exploration and the Classroom*. These can serve as a guide for teachers in how to approach literature in the classroom.

1. Teachers need to allow children the freedom to deal with their own reactions to the text.

Readers must first reflect on their response to the book and then formulate their own ideas through discussion and further reflection.

2. The classroom situation and the relationship with the teacher should create a feeling of security.

Children should be able to express their opinions and reactions without fear of criticism or ridicule. If they are going to be able to react freely to the literature, they need a safe environment. Small group discussion can provide this setting for sharing of ideas.

3. Teachers should provide time and opportunity for "an initial crystallization of a personal sense of the work" (p.69).

Strategies such as journals, reading logs and response statements immediately after reading are often a good way to capture children's first responses and allows them to develop their own ideas.

4. Teachers need to avoid undue emphasis upon the form in which the children's reactions are couched.

Children require the freedom to express their responses in a variety of ways.

5. The teacher should try to find points of contact among the opinions of children.

Through small group and full class discussion, the children explore the similarities and differences in their opinions and ideas.

6. The teacher's influence should be "the elaboration of the vital influence inherent in literature itself" (p.74).

The teacher should help the children live through the literature rather than give knowledge about it.

7. Although free response is necessary, it is not sufficient. Children still need to be led to reflection and analysis.

Children should be encouraged to question what they read and reflect on their initial responses. (pp.66-75)

Rosenblatt states,

The more conscious the individual is of the nature of the cultural forces with which he is interacting, the more intelligently can he accept or reject them, and the more intelligently can he modify their power and their direction.
(p. 155)

In a search for curriculum that will have an impact on children's lives, the power of literature cannot be underestimated. Probst claims,

Rosenblatt has offered us a conception of literature and its teaching that we have yet to fully explore. It is a conception that respects the student, the teacher, the text, and the culture and suggests a sensible relationship among them. (p. 37)

Summary

The current research described in this chapter gives a foundation for an effective and purposeful thematic literature unit. It is evident from this literature review, there are many factors to keep in mind. The unit should consist of integrative learning experiences that enable children to discover relationships and patterns. It should reflect the most current principles of teaching and learning so that it involves children in problem solving, interactive learning, critical thinking and independent thought. This allows the children to link new knowledge with previous knowledge and construct their own meaning. A thematic literature unit should include a variety of collaborative, independent and whole class learning experiences. Evaluation and assessment practices should be in keeping with these student-centered instructional practices. It is evident that children's literature can play an important role in helping children develop a more global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others. As they live vicariously through literature and gain insight into other perspectives, children develop an emotional and cognitive sensitivity. The realistic and historical fiction chosen for a unit should reflect society and should include a range of stories about other cultural groups. Children bring to the reading experience their own attitudes, beliefs and past experiences. They respond to and approach literature personally. An effective thematic literature unit allows children

to make this initial response and then leads them to reflection and analysis of why they responded in that way.

CHAPTER III - CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: THEMATIC LITERATURE UNIT

Chapter II gives the foundation for developing a thematic literature unit. The teacher needs this foundation in order to: identify appropriate goals; select related knowledge (concepts), values, skills and strategies; choose related learning outcomes; select appropriate learning resources, such as children's literature; realize children respond to literature in many ways; create learning experiences to accommodate different learning styles, interests and abilities; ensure the classroom environment is conducive to working collaboratively; and understand that assessment is an ongoing process. In order to design an effective and purposeful thematic literature unit, all these factors are important.

This chapter presents a curriculum development framework that helps clarify the process of developing a thematic literature unit and ensures that all factors cited above are taken into account. It also describes the design of the thematic literature unit.

The Curriculum Development Framework

The curriculum development framework model (Figure 3.1) delineates the process of designing a thematic literature unit into six steps:

Step 1: Identify Goal(s).

The teacher chooses a goal(s) for the unit related to the needs of the children and by referring to the appropriate curriculum guides. He/she asks the question: What do I want the children to learn?

Step 2: Identify Knowledge (Concepts), Values, Skills and Strategies.

The concepts and ideas contained in the goal(s) are clarified by defining terms, and linking concepts and ideas. This step also involves identifying the values, skills and strategies related to the goal(s).

Step 3: Select Learning Outcomes.

The knowledge (concepts), values, skills and strategies identified for the unit are stated as learning outcomes. These learning outcomes often reflect the expectations outlined in the curriculum guides.

Step 4: Select Learning Resources.

The teacher selects the learning resources required for the unit. In many cases, this depends on the availability and appropriateness of the learning resources for the age group in mind. This involves using criteria to evaluate their quality and suitability.

Step 5: Create learning experiences.

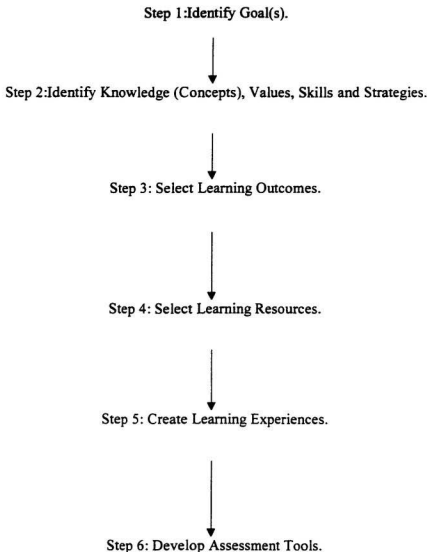
The teacher designs learning experiences by bringing together the learning outcomes and learning resources. These learning experiences reflect the principles of teaching and learning to ensure the children are actively involved in the learning process.

Step 6: Develop Assessment Tools.

The teacher chooses the assessment tools to determine whether the learning outcomes have been realized. These assessment tools reflect the student-centered nature of the unit, and provide the children, teacher and parent with information on the learning that has taken place during the unit.

This chapter describes the development of this thematic literature unit according to the steps in the model (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1. Curriculum Development Framework of a Thematic Literature Unit



Adapted from Curriculum Development Framework (E. Strong, 1996).

Design of a Thematic Literature Unit

Step 1: Identify Goal(s).

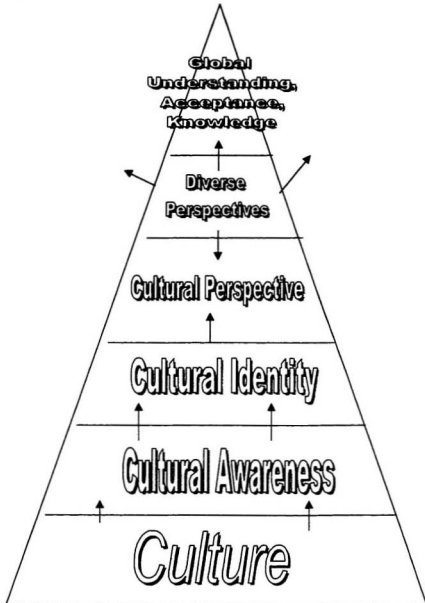
The goal of this thematic literature is to give the children an opportunity to develop a more global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others. This goal originates from both the formal and informal curriculum. In today's complex, interdependent world, people need to reflect upon and evaluate their beliefs and attitudes, as well as have the ability to look at things from different perspectives. It is important to have an understanding of culture and realize a person is a product of his/her own cultural background. They need to realize culture gives people the lens through which they view the world. Children also need to examine and compare situations from different perspectives so they develop an understanding of how people view things in different ways.

Step 2: Identify Knowledge (Concepts), Values, Skills and Strategies.

Concepts

The goal of developing children's global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others is very broad. In order to reach this goal, children need an understanding of some important related concepts or knowledge. These concepts have been identified as culture, cultural awareness, cultural identity, cultural and diverse perspectives. The model of Conceptual Framework of the unit (Figure 3.2) demonstrates how these concepts are linked. This gives a conceptual framework for the unit.

Figure 3.2. Model of Conceptual Framework of the Unit



The top of the pyramid (Figure 3.2) represents the goal of the unit. The children develop a more **global understanding, acceptance and knowledge** of themselves and other people as they work with the concepts explored in the unit. The concepts form the stepping stones by which this goal may be realized.

The first concept to be explored is **culture**, which is placed at the base of the pyramid. It provides the foundation for the way a person lives, thinks and views the world. Culture is a unique set of customs, languages, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours shared by a group of people passed on from generation to generation. Members of a cultural group take their culture for granted as they learn from the people around them.

Through an exploration of different cultures, children reach the next level in the pyramid, **cultural awareness**. A state of being conscious of the meaning of culture, and a realization of the impact of one's physical and social environment on one's beliefs and values. Children begin to examine their beliefs and values and understand why they live the way they do. This often happens when two cultures meet and they realize that not everyone lives in the same way.

As people become aware of who they are and where they come from, they develop a **cultural identity**. A person's self concept in terms of the culture to which one belongs, how one views his/herself in the light of this culture and the world. This brings a sense of belonging and pride in who they are and where they live.

A person's culture, cultural awareness and cultural identity combine to create a **cultural perspective**, a way of viewing a situation from the point of view of one's own beliefs and values, the lens by which one views the world.

In order to accept other ways of life, attitudes and beliefs, it is necessary to look at things from different points of view and realize how others might see the world (**diverse perspectives**). When a person can step outside his/her own cultural perspective, and view things in different ways, he/she reaches **global acceptance, understanding and knowledge**.

Values, Skills and Strategies

In order to explore these concepts, children need to develop many values, skills and strategies. A key to developing global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others is to develop interpersonal relationships. A priority in this unit therefore is to give children the opportunity to share ideas, opinions and feelings, express these ideas in different ways and respond creatively to what they read in the literature. It is necessary to develop effective listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Children develop them as they read and then respond in a variety of ways. As children work together linking ideas from texts to their experiences, they learn to work more effectively together and gain an understanding of themselves and others.

Step 3: Select Learning Outcomes

In a thematic literature unit, the concepts, skills and strategies are expressed as learning outcomes. Language Arts and Social Studies Curricula are the focus of this unit, however the outcomes reach across many subject areas. The children are reading and viewing, speaking and listening, writing and representing as they explore the concepts through literature. The conceptual model (Figure 3.2) gives a framework for the Social Studies learning outcomes listed in this step. By reading and responding to a wide range

of children's literature, and actively participating in a variety of learning experiences. the children develop an understanding of these concepts. Through this interaction, they learn to work effectively together. They begin to develop a global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others. In this stage these skills, strategies and concepts are defined in terms of learning outcomes.

The following learning outcomes in this unit are taken or adapted from the 1997 draft copies of the *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum Grades 4-6*, and the *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Social Studies Curriculum Entry Level -Grade 12* (Department of Education, 1997). These documents have been developed collaboratively by regional committees for the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF) to respond to the needs of students and society keeping in mind the latest research in teaching and learning. These curricula outcomes are statements that describe what skills, knowledge and attitudes, children are expected to demonstrate at the end of certain key stages of their education. For the purpose of this unit, the key stage curriculum outcomes for the end of grade 6 were deemed suitable for this age group.

English Language Arts

Speaking and Listening

Children will:

1. Present and contribute thoughts, ideas, and opinions constructively in conversation.
small group, and whole group situations.
2. Defend and support their ideas, points of view and opinions with evidence from the text or personal experience.

3. Ask and respond to questions to seek clarification or explanation of ideas and concepts.
4. Demonstrate awareness of the needs, rights and feelings of others by listening attentively and respecting other points of view or opinions.

Reading and Viewing

Children will:

5. Read and experience a variety of children's literature as a vicarious way to explore ideas, points of view and places.
6. Express their response to literature in a variety of ways. (e.g. role playing, pictures, discussion)
7. Respond creatively and imaginatively by using information and feelings from texts to create drawings, models, dramatic presentations, and written materials.
8. Explain why a particular text matters to them and demonstrate an increasing ability to make connections between texts, themselves and other people.

Writing and Other Ways of Representing

Children will:

9. Use a range of writing strategies and other ways of representing to:
 - record, develop, and reflect on ideas.
 - compare their thoughts and beliefs to those of others.
 - describe feelings, reactions, values, and attitudes.

10. Develop a range of prewriting and writing strategies (webbing, proof reading, revising and editing) to develop effective final products and other representations in terms of clarity, organization and effectiveness in communicating ideas.

Social Studies

Culture/ Cultural Awareness

Children will:

11. Understand the concept of culture.
12. Be able to identify the essential elements of culture.
13. Explore similarities and differences in the ways cultures meet human needs and wants.
14. Understand how cultures change and are transmitted.

Cultural Identity

Children will:

15. Demonstrate an understanding of the concept, cultural identity.
16. Show how family, heritage and nationality contribute to cultural identity.

Cultural/ Diverse Perspectives

Children will:

17. Understand how a person's culture determines how one views the world.
18. Demonstrate how people from different cultural groups can interpret experiences in various ways.

These outcomes describe the teacher's expectations of the children and help determine what learning resources and learning experiences will be required in order for these outcomes to be met.

Step 4: Select Learning Resources.

In this unit, children read and respond to a wide range of novels, short stories, and picture books in which they explore the concepts and achieve the goal and learning outcomes described in the previous steps. Literature is the springboard for reflection and discussion. It gives insight into the human condition. Huck, Hepler, Hickman and Kiefer (1997) state, "Literature is an imaginative shaping of life and thought into the forms and structure of language" (p.5). The experience of literature always has two dimensions, the reader and the book. The language and the pictures need to provide children with an aesthetic experience that is a vivid reconstruction of the past, an extension of experience or creation of a new experience (Huck et al. 1997). In selecting suitable literature for a thematic literature unit, it is important to examine both literary and aesthetic qualities. Huck et al. (1997) outline the following criteria for good works of fiction:

1. Plot

The plot grows naturally from the action and the decision of the characters as they deal with problems or situations. Solutions are not always clear cut but the events in the story are interrelated and logical.

2. Setting

The setting may take place in the past, present or future. It may be a specific place or convey a universal feeling. However, the time and place should affect the action, the characters and the theme of the story.

3. Theme

Most well-written books have a larger meaning beneath the story's surface. The author provides a dimension to the story that goes beyond the story. However, the theme is not so explicit that it dominates the plot and characterization.

4. Characterization

The people portrayed in the story are credible and multidimensional. The reader gets to know their strengths and weaknesses gradually as the story unfolds. In a good story, the characters also show evidence of growth and development.

5. Style

An author's writing style suits the plot, theme and characters of the story. It creates and reflects the mood. Descriptive and figurative language can help describe the setting and create atmosphere but it should not be too lengthy and get in the way of the natural flow of the story.

6. Point of View

When evaluating a story it is important to ask who is telling the story and how this influences the story. By examining the point of view, the reader can understand the perspective the writer brings to the story and why this perspective was chosen. The point of view influences the style, structure and characterization of the story.

7. Other Considerations

The book should be well designed, and the format of the book should be related to the text. If the book contains illustrations, they should be aesthetically pleasing and have a purpose. It is also important to consider what age range would most likely appreciate the story and how the story compares with other books on the same subject. (p. 29)

In particular, for the literature that represents a specific cultural group, Yokota's (1993) five criteria for the selection of multicultural children's literature are useful. He states quality multicultural literature should:

1. Have cultural accuracy, both in detail and of larger issues.

The cultural information and illustrations should give the reader a true sense of the culture it is portraying.

2. Be rich in cultural details.

The cultural details should be a natural part of the story, enhancing the plot and giving the reader a real sense of the culture. However, the purpose of the book should not be to teach about the culture.

3. Contain authentic dialogue and relationships.

Each culture has its own way of expressing feelings and emotions and speaking to each other. These details need to be accurate.

4. Contain in-depth treatment of cultural issues.

The problems, beliefs and concerns should be relevant to the cultural group portrayed in the novel.

5. Include a "minority" group for a purpose.

All characters in the book should be portrayed as distinct individuals, deeply rooted in their culture. They should not be included just to give a multicultural flavour.

(pp.159-160)

The children's literature selected for this thematic literature unit is described in the following pages.

Novels

In all the novels selected for this unit, the main characters' beliefs and values are shaped by the context of the world from which they came. In many cases these characters are becoming aware of their culture or searching for their cultural identity as they learn to cope in an alien world or with others who have different points of view. The novels do not all look at one particular culture but help the reader examine the many issues involved in how people view themselves and the world around them. By vicariously examining, responding, discussing, and comparing other cultures, children develop an understanding of the terms such as culture, cultural identity and culturally diverse perspectives. The reader realizes that people view the world through their own cultural lens and it is sometimes necessary to look beyond a personal point of view and see things from other perspectives. The novels selected represent future, contemporary and past worlds, so that children realize that no matter when and where people live, they have similar needs, wants and problems.

Past Worlds

The historical fiction novels examine alien worlds of the past. The characters in these novels find themselves in a different world for many reasons. They have to cope with their own cultural perceptions of their new surroundings as well as deal with the prejudices of the people with whom they come in contact. Many of these novels deal with immigrants settling in North America. The reader gains insight into how they adapted to an alien environment. Their cultural identity is threatened, as they try to fit into a new culture. They gradually learn to adapt to their new way of life.

From Anna (1972), Jean Little:

Anna, a German girl and her family are forced to leave Germany in 1933 and settle in Canada. Anna gradually learns to accept her new world, language and being different. However, most importantly, her family recognizes her for who she is.

The Accidental Orphan (1998), Constance Horne:

The main character has to deal with the discrimination and prejudice against her because people think she is an orphan from Liverpool, England. She adjusts and accepts to her new way of life in the New World.

The Belonging Place (1997), Jean Little:

Elsbet Mary, an orphan tells her story of her adoption into her uncle's family after her mother dies. They live in Aberdeen, Scotland then immigrate to Upper Canada. She tells about her reluctance to leave Scotland, the terrible journey to the New World, and the adjustment of living in a strange place. As the title suggests, she discovers the place where she belongs, her family.

The Dream Carvers (1995), Joan Clark:

Thrand, a Norse boy also comes to terms with his own fears and prejudices towards the Beothuck people. He learns to respect a new way of life, very different from his own.

The Sign of the Beaver (1983), Elizabeth George Speare:

Matt learns to look at the world from the Native American perspective. He overcomes his fear of these people as he learns about their way of life. The reader also gains insight into the differences between the two cultures in terms of coping with a harsh physical environment and their beliefs and values.

The Sky is Falling (1989), Kit Pearson:

Norah and her brother Gavin are sent to live in Canada as war guests during World War II. The novel relates the struggles Norah has adjusting to her new home. There are many differences between her two worlds.

Shadow in Hawthorn Bay (1986), Janet Lunn:

A story about a young girl adjusting to life in Upper Canada in 1815. Her Scottish beliefs and ways make her different from the other settlers.

Contemporary Worlds

These novels look at the issues of cultural awareness and diverse perspectives. The reader gains insight into adjusting and being accepted in a new place. Issues such as prejudice and misconceptions of cultural groups are explored in contemporary settings.

Dogsong (1985), Gary Paulsen:

Russell learns about the traditional way of life from an old man and escapes the modern way of life in his village to discover his own identity.

Maniac Magee (1990), Jerry Spinelli:

Maniac Magee is a homeless boy who becomes a legend in both White East End and Black West End of a community called Twin Mills. As a character, he shows respect and appreciation for people no matter what their background.

My Name is Paula Popowich (1983), Monica Hughes:

Paula wishes she could look more like her blond, beautiful mother. She has never known her father and her mother will not talk about her past. When they move to western Canada, she gets to know her grandmother and finds out about her Ukrainian heritage. The reader gains insight into how one's heritage plays an important role in shaping a person's perception of his/her world. It is an exploration of the concept of cultural identity.

Next Door Neighbors (1989), Sarah Ellis:

Peggy has to adjust to living in the city, going to a new school and making new friends. She makes friends with two people who are not only new to the neighbourhood, but who have immigrated to Canada.

Out of the Dark (1997), Welwyn Wilton Katz:

Ben and his family move to Ship Cove, a small community in Newfoundland from Ottawa. Ben's fascination for the Vikings helps him come to terms with living in a

strange place and the recent loss of his mother. Throughout the book, there are references to the Vikings way of life.

Winners (1984), Mary-Ellen Lang Collura:

Jordy Threebears, a fifteen-year old boy returns to the Ash Creek Reserve to live with his grandfather. At first, he finds the adjustment difficult, however, the gift of a wild mare helps him come to terms with his identity.

Future Worlds

In the science fiction novels, the children explore future worlds. These imaginary worlds give insight into how cultures develop and adapt according to beliefs, needs, wants and physical environment.

The Dream Catcher (1986), Monica Hughes:

This novel deals with a world of conformity. When Ruth dreams about people from different worlds, the people in the community decide to take a risk and open their closed world to others. The novel demonstrates how groups originating from the same place adapted to their environment in different ways.

The Giver (1994), Lois Lowry:

This book poses the question: What if in the future, humans could create a perfect world in which suffering is erased and everyone is the same? In this novel, the memories of the past are taken away, and the culture is controlled and maintained in the same manner, generation after generation. Everyone has all his/her needs and wants looked after as long as he/she conforms to the rules of the society. When Jonas, the main character becomes the receiver of memories, he begins to question the

beliefs of his people and realizes there is a huge cost in controlling everything. His world becomes alien to him and he feels he does not belong.

The Green Book (1981), Jill Paton Walsh:

This book demonstrates the difficulties of adapting to an alien environment. It also examines the importance of stories when making a home in an alien world.

The Keeper of the Isis Light (1980), Monica Hughes:

The reader looks at the problems of adapting to new environments and the acceptance of physical differences. Issues of prejudice and acceptance are the main causes of conflict in the novel.

There is No Atmosphere Up Here (1986), Paula Danziger:

This book shows how even in the future, teenagers have a culture of their own. It is a lighthearted story about a girl trying to adjust to her new home on the moon.

Short Stories

The short stories chosen for the unit also bring out different aspects of cultural awareness, cultural identity and looking at things from different perspectives. They can be linked with the novels to provide further insight for discussion.

Knowing Anna, D. P. Barnhouse:

Anna is adjusting to a new life in a new country. She is not accepted by the girls in her dance class because she cannot speak English well and she appears to be different.

One Candle, Many Lights, Kathleen Cook Waldron:

A Jewish child struggles with an assignment the teacher gives the class on Christmas traditions.

These two stories show the reader not to presume that all people live in the same way. There are reasons for people's differences.

Old Glory, Bruce Colville:

A science fiction short story about a controlling world of rules and regulations where everyone is the same. It looks at the culture from the point of view of a boy who disagrees with how his great grandfather stands up to these rules. This is a real contrast to the point of view of Jonas in The Giver (Lowry).

The Family Album, Bernice Thurman Hunter:

A collection of short stories that trace the roots of a girl who discovered she did have family ties.

Remember, Chrysanthemum, Hatashita-Lee:

Allison learns about her heritage when her grandmother shows her pictures and tells her about how the Japanese Canadians were treated after 1941.

Shadows of the Past, John Wilson:

This story gives the reader a glimpse of how our past gives meaning to our present world.

The last three stories complement the ideas in the novels My Name is Paula Popowich (Hughes) and Dogsong (Paulsen).

The Harmonica, Norma Charles:

Ben is an orphan who has come to Canada in search of a new and better life. When his new master mistreats him, he realizes he must find his freedom somewhere else. It enhances some of the ideas brought out in the novel, The Accidental Orphan (Horne)

Picture Books

The picture books, like the novels and short stories give the children insight into people's thinking as they move from one culture to another. They help to show how people bring with them customs, memories and traditions that combine with the new culture. This is how cultures change and are transmitted over time.

Grandfather's Journey (1993), Allen Say:

A story that shows how people will always miss things about their old way of life when they move from one place to another. Even when you adjust to a new place, memories are still very important and the old roots will always be a part of who you are.

Roses Sing on New Snow (1991), Paul Yee:

A modern folktale showing how things evolve in a new country.

The Sandwich (1975), Ian Wallace:

A very simple little story that shows how a little boy handles his difference and keeps his cultural identity in tact.

Tree of Cranes, (1991), Allen Say:

A mother from California gives her son his first Christmas in Japan.

This listing of novels, short stories and picture books is only a small sample of the

wide range of literature available for this unit. Teachers can supplement and modify the literature used to suit the interests, needs and reading level of the children in the class. Children also can share books they find that give further insight into the theme. They could use the Yokota's (1993) criteria to evaluate whether the books about other cultures are good quality multicultural literature. The following web (Figure 3.3) links the literature mentioned in this section to the main concepts outlined in the model of Conceptual Framework of the Unit (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.3. Web of Concepts and Selected Children's Literature (continued on pg. 54)

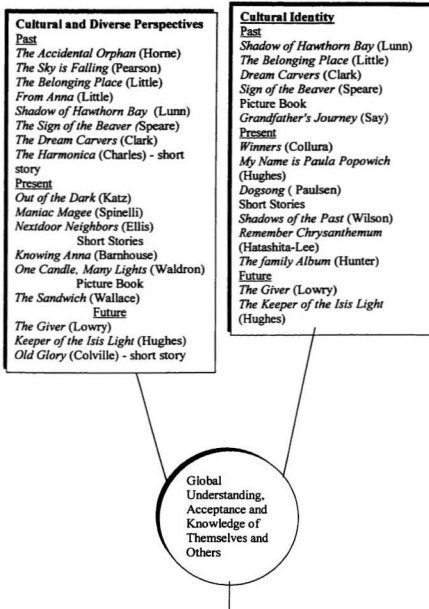


Figure 3.3. Continued

Culture, Cultural Awareness

Past

Sign of the Beaver (Speare)

Dream Carvers (Clark)

Present

Dogsong (Paulsen)

Winners (Collura)

Future

The Giver (Lowry)

Keeper of the Isis Light

(Hughes)

The Green Book (Walsh)

The Dream Catcher (Hughes)

There's No Atmosphere Up Here
(Danziger)

Old Glory (Colville) -short story

Picture Books

Tree of Cranes (Say)

Rose Sings on New Snow (Yee)

Step 5: Creating Learning Experiences

The next step, often the most challenging in developing a thematic literature unit is designing the learning experiences. The learning experiences in this unit work towards developing children's global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others. However, the unit needs a theme, generalization and a guiding question to link the learning experiences together (Lemlech, 1998). The writer suggests the theme, Alien Worlds. The generalization is: People in all worlds have similar needs and wants but their way of life may be different according to where they live; their beliefs; attitudes; and heritage. This may cause people to have diverse perspectives. An investigation of this theme and generalization leads to an understanding of the concepts of culture, cultural awareness, cultural identity and culturally diverse perspectives. The exploration of the theme begins by posing the guiding question, What is an alien world?. This question directs the search for understanding and all learning experiences are designed to help answer it (Traver, 1998). After reading the selected literature for the unit, the children brainstorm, web and discuss their ideas before exploring the theme in more detail.

To investigate the theme in more depth, the learning experiences are organized under three strands, culture/cultural awareness, (What is this world like?); cultural identity (Who am I?); and cultural and diverse perspectives (What is my point of view?). These are the concepts outlined in the model (Figure 3.2). Many of these learning experiences are suited for small group exploration. The webbing plan for the unit (Figure 3.4) outlines the key elements of each concept and the guiding questions for each strand. This is a

useful tool for developing learning experiences for any novel for this theme. It gives the teacher a pictorial representation of the unit (Borich, 1998).

After the children explore the concepts under these strands, they return to the original question, What is an alien world?. This brings together the theme, generalization and guiding questions explored throughout the unit (Lemlich, 1998).

The following section includes the webbing plans for the intra-textual experiences for The Sign of the Beaver (Spear) and The Giver (Lowry); an inter-textual webbing plan for The Sign of the Beaver (Spear) and other novels; and a web of lived -textual experiences from selected children's literature. This provides the teacher and children with a variety of learning experiences from which to choose as they explore the theme. As the children read and respond to the literature, many other learning experiences will evolve as they pursue their interests and ideas. The learning outcomes (L.O.) outlined in Step 3 have been identified by number at the end of each learning experience. The materials needed to complete the learning experiences described in the webs are contained in Appendix B. Appendix B-10 includes additional learning experiences.

Figure 3.4. Webbing Plan for Learning Experiences

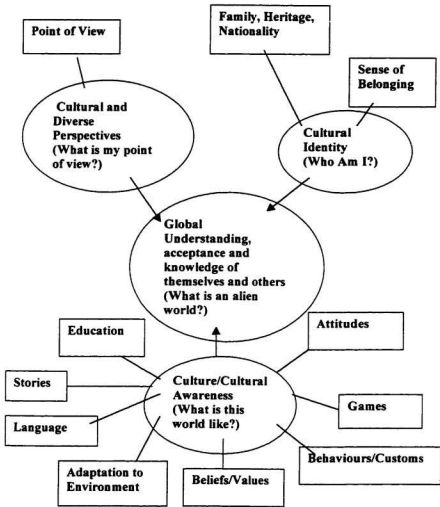


Figure 3.5. Web of Intra-textual Learning Experiences for *Sign of the Beaver* (Sprear)

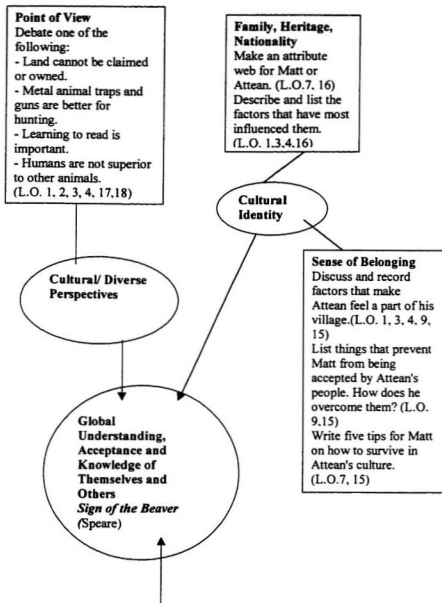


Figure 3.5. Continued

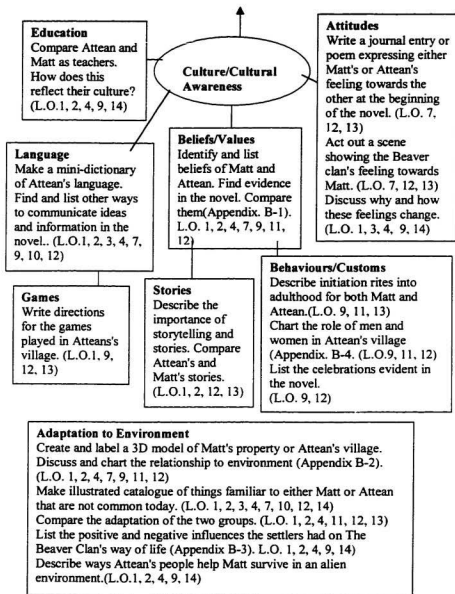


Figure 3.6. Continued

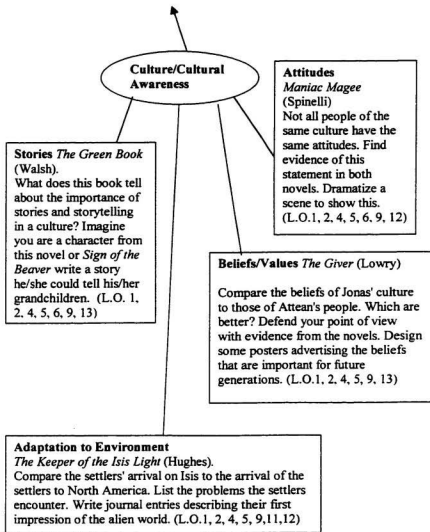


Figure 3.6. Web of Inter- textual Learning Experiences for Sign of the Beaver

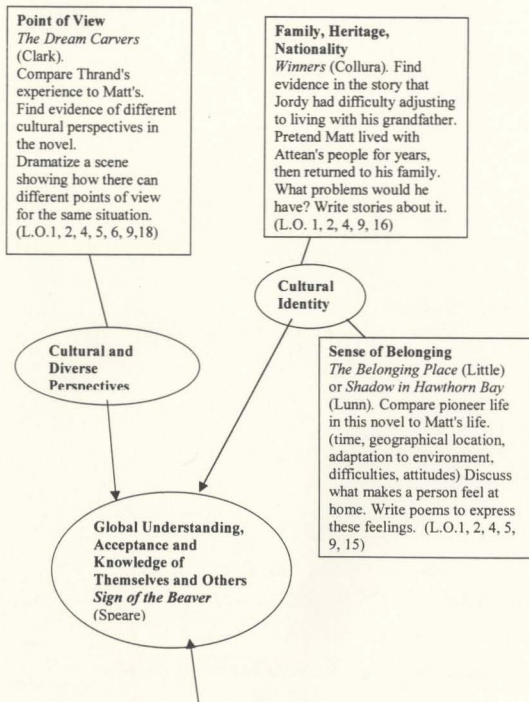


Figure 3.7. Web of Intra-textual Learning Experiences for *The Giver* (Lowry)

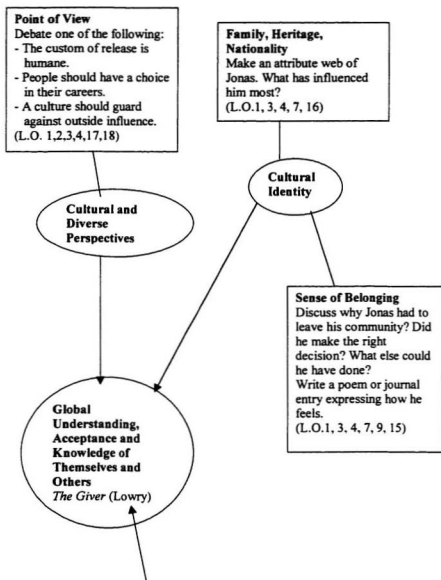


Figure 3.7. Continued

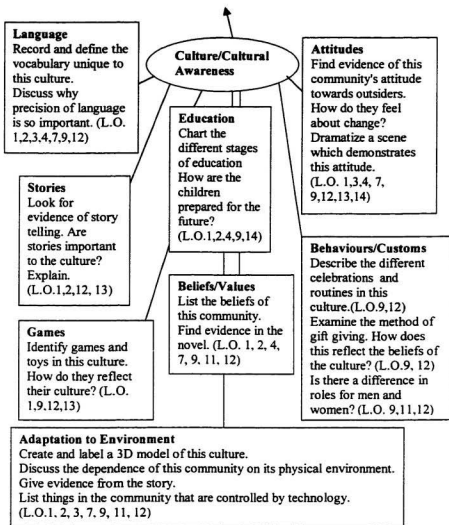


Figure 3.8. Webbing Plan of Lived textual Learning Experiences: Various Children's Literature

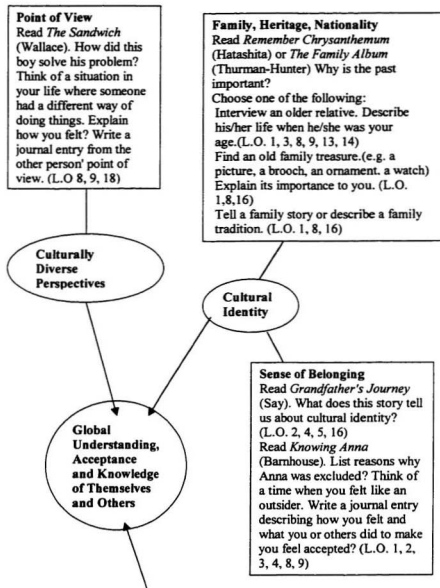
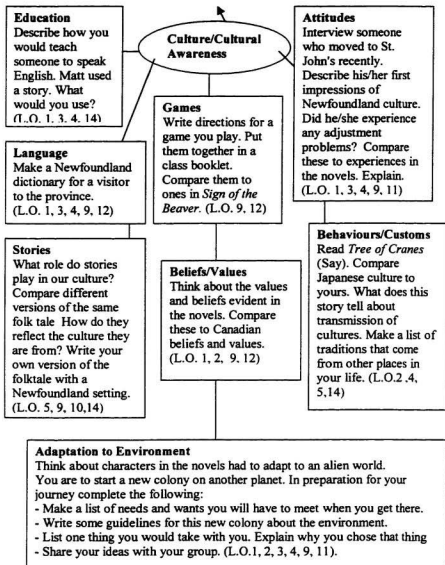


Figure 3.8. Continued



Step 6: Assessment and Evaluation

As discussed in Chapter II, portfolios are an ideal way for the children, parents and teacher to be active participants in the assessment and evaluation of a child's growth.

Graves and Sunstein (1992) claim,

Portfolios mean more than evaluation or assessment. They are tied to our definition of literacy. When we read and write constantly, when we reflect on who we are and who we want to be, we cannot help but grow. (p.xii)

There is no set way to develop portfolios and teachers often have their own established routine. However, the following tools maybe helpful in the organization and collection of data for the portfolio and assess whether the learning outcomes for this unit are met.

Language Arts

Speaking and Listening

The teacher assesses both formal and informal speaking and listening performances in small group and whole class discussion. Children keep a record of learning experiences related to speaking and listening in their portfolios (Appendix C-1). The teacher records observations on the checklist provided (Appendix C-2). The teacher evaluates group presentations according to specific criteria outlined on the evaluation sheet (Appendix C-3).

Reading and Viewing

Each child's reading growth is assessed in terms of interest, ability to make connections between different texts, themselves and other people. The following tools give the child, parent and teacher a clear profile of each child's progress in this area. They can be a part of each child's portfolio or kept separately.

1. **Reading Log:** The children record novels they read related to the theme and respond to them in a variety of ways (Appendix C-4).
2. **Response Journal:** The children respond daily to what they have read or discussed in class. At times, they are asked to respond to a given topic or a question related to a novel, short story or poem.
3. **Reading Conferences:** Each child has a reading conference with a peer, a teacher and a parent throughout the course of the unit. This gives the child an opportunity to share what he/she has read and get feedback. He/she can assess his/her progress and sets new goals. The content of each conference is recorded on a sheet (Appendix C-5).

Writing and Other Ways of Representing

The children express their ideas in many forms. A record sheet inside each child's portfolio helps the teacher and children track the writing and other ways of representing completed in the unit (Appendix C-6). The children then decide which pieces they want included for evaluation. Each child has a writing conference with a peer, the teacher and a parent to discuss pieces of writing and to develop the writing process. This helps to identify his/her strengths, needs and set new goals (Appendix C-7). The same thing is done for group work. Each group has a special group portfolio. The teacher has a conference with the group to assess progress.

Social Studies

The teacher assesses the children's growth in this area through observation of their attitudes and understanding as they discuss and complete the learning experiences in the unit (see appendix C-8 for a checklist of outcomes).

Assessment of Small Group Interaction

Throughout the unit, the children complete many tasks in small groups. They need an opportunity to assess how well they worked together. A group assessment form is used to gain information on each child's rating of his/her individual and group's performance (Appendix C-9).

Communication to Parents

At the beginning of the unit, the teacher sends a letter home describing the unit and the outcomes related to the theme. The letter informs them about the portfolios, reading and writing conferences. They are invited to share stories or family histories (Appendix C-10). At the end of the unit, the portfolios are a valuable way to inform parents of their child's progress.

Summary

This chapter describes the process of designing the thematic literature unit. It outlines the goal, conceptual framework, learning outcomes, children's literature, learning experiences and ways of assessing children's growth. This framework is only a guide to the wealth of possible reading and learning experiences the children could have through the exploration of this theme. The teacher can adapt the unit to suit the learning needs and interests of the children in the class. He/she may decide to narrow the scope of the unit either by exploring one of the main concepts of the model or by looking at one of the past, present or future worlds.

The writer realizes this framework has enough scope to develop several thematic literature units. However, it gives teachers insight into some ways to develop children's

global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others through children's literature. However, it is important to remember that the children should first enjoy the literature then look at it in a culturally conscious way. These novels are not to be considered as a text on a specific culture. The following chapter outlines a curriculum implementation framework for a thematic literature unit of this kind.

CHAPTER IV - CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK: THEMATIC LITERATURE UNIT

The curriculum implementation framework (Figure 4.1) serves as a guide for the organization of the learning experiences outlined in Chapter III. Each learning experience allows children to build on previous experience and knowledge, and formulate new ideas and insights about the theme. The teacher, as a facilitator of learning ensures there is a balance of individual, small group and whole class activities so the children's abilities, learning styles and needs are accommodated.

For this thematic literature unit, Lemlich's (1998) three-stage implementation model (Figure 4.1) is used. The model includes an Initiation Stage, a Developmental Activities Stage and a Culmination Stage. Descriptive details of each stage follows:

Stage 1: The Initiation Stage

During the Initiation Stage, the teacher introduces the main theme, generalization and guiding question of the thematic literature unit, as well as the major learning resources. Guiding critical questions are posed to stimulate the children's thinking and spark their interest. Much of the work in this stage is whole group with the teacher as the initiator. The learning experiences at this stage consist of reading and responding: brainstorming and webbing, questioning and predicting. Through these learning experiences the teacher discovers what the children already know and sets the stage for further inquiry.

Stage 2: Developmental Activities Stage

This stage consists of developmental activities (learning experiences) in which the children branch out individually or in small groups to explore, in further depth, aspects of

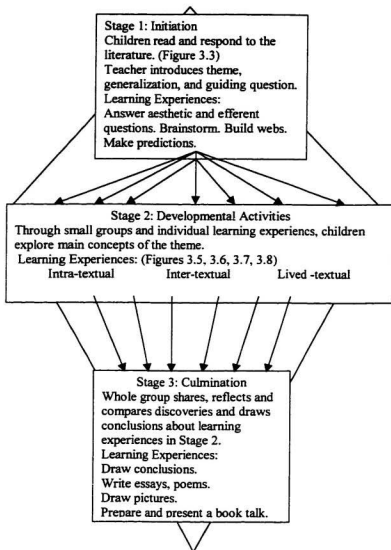
the theme. In this stage, the teacher is the facilitator guiding and assessing the children's knowledge (concepts), values, skills and strategies. This stage includes intra-textual, inter-textual, and lived-textual learning experiences. The children link ideas, compare and contrast information and communicate their ideas and discoveries through drama, art, creative writing or oral presentations.

Stage 3: Culmination Stage

This stage is the culmination of ideas, new knowledge and insights learned from Stage 2. It takes the children back to the questions formulated in Stage 1 and helps them share what they have discovered, draw conclusions, make connections and reflect on what they have learned. The learning experiences in this stage are a combination of individual, small and whole group situations. They consist of book talks, representing ideas in essays, poetry or pictures, and discussions.

The Curriculum Implementation Model (Figure 4.1) on the following page outlines these three stages. This chapter then describes each of these stages in terms of this particular thematic literature unit.

Figure 4.1. Webbing Plan of Implementation Framework for a Thematic Literature Unit



Description of Implementation Framework

Stage 1: Initiation

To begin the thematic literature unit, the teacher introduces the historical fiction, Sign of the Beaver (Sprear) to the children through a book talk. Such a talk would generate interest in the story, enticing the children to read the book. After the book talk, they read the book independently, with a partner, or someone reads it to them. This novel is a good introduction to the theme because of its detailed account of the two cultures. It also gives insight into the feelings of the main characters, Matt and Attean have for each other throughout the story. The story portrays all the major concepts of the theme. Alien Worlds. It shows how although they both regard each other's world as alien at first, they see beyond their differences in the end. Upon completion of this reading, each child responds to the story in a response journal to questions that focus first on aesthetic and then efferent responses.

- What is your first reaction or response to the story? Describe it briefly.
- What emotions did you feel as you read the story?
- What would it feel like to be Matt or Attean or participate in an event in the story.
- Have you ever experienced what Matt or Attean experienced? Elaborate.
- Do you think the story is a good one? Why, or why not? (Strong, 1998)

The children discuss their responses with a partner and then with the whole class (Think-Pair- Share, Lyman, 1992). In this way, each child formulates his/her opinions and thoughts before he/she shares them with others (Rosenblatt, 1976). Webbing, comparing

and contrasting their responses, allows the children to reflect on their initial responses, elaborate on them and formulate new ideas.

The teacher introduces:

1. The theme: Alien Worlds
2. The generalization: People in all worlds have similar needs and wants but their way of life may be different according to where they live; their beliefs: attitudes; and heritage. This may cause people to have diverse perspectives.
3. The guiding question of the theme: What is an alien world?

The children through think-pair-share (Lyman, 1992), brainstorming, webbing and discussion examine the following questions in relation to the novel, Sign of the Beaver (Speare):

- What does the word, alien mean?
- In what ways is the environment in this novel alien?
- Who finds it more alien. Matt or Attean? Explain.
- How does Matt adjust to this alien world?
- What beliefs, customs and behaviours in Attean's world are alien to Matt?
- What is alien to Attean in Matt's world?
- What makes a world alien?

They are now ready to explore the main concepts(culture, cultural awareness, cultural identity, cultural and diverse perspectives) of the theme.

Stage 2: Developmental Activities

In this stage, the learning experiences are designed for small group (3 or 4 children) or individual work. The children complete the intra-textual learning experiences (Figure 3.5) to investigate the main concepts of the theme through the novel, Sign of the Beaver (Speare). Then they explore other books and compare them to Sign of the Beaver (Speare) (Inter-textual Web, Figure 3.6) Finally they link ideas in a various literature to their own world (Lived-textual Web, Figure 3.8).

Intra-textual Learning Experiences (Figure 3.5)

Investigation 1: What is this world like? (Culture/ Cultural Awareness)

- The children choose either Matt's or Attean's culture to investigate by going back into the story to find information about their way of life. Each group creates a model of the culture and then completes one of the learning experiences in the section, Adaptation to Environment (Figure 3.5). Afterwards, the children share their work with the class.
- There are seven other elements (education, stories, language, adaptation to environment, beliefs/values, behaviours/customs, games and attitudes) of culture outlined on the web in Figure 3.5. The teacher assigns a different learning experience to each group. The learning experiences requiring the completion of charts or lists use the cooperative learning structure, Roundtable (Kagan, 1990). Each group has only one chart and one marker. Each child is asked to contribute something to the chart until nothing else can be added. This ensures maximum participation from all

children. Each group then shares what they have done with the class through a display, oral presentation or dramatization.

Investigation 2: Who am I? (Cultural Identity)

- All groups complete the learning experience in the section: Family, Heritage, Nationality (Figure 3.5).
- For the section: Sense of Belonging, each group chooses one learning experience. Depending on the number of groups, it is possible that two or more groups may complete the same learning experience.
- Upon completion, they share their findings with the class.

Investigation 3: What is my point of view? (Cultural/Diverse Perspectives)

- Each group decides on a topic and point of view from this section in Figure 3.5. (The teacher may want to assign a point of view to each group.) The groups prepare their arguments by finding evidence to support their point of view in the novel. They have debates between groups with opposing points of view.

If time permits the teacher could follow the same format with The Giver (Lowry) (Figure 3.7). In this way, the children are introduced to the main concepts through two very different novels, a historical fiction then a science fiction. They could then compare the two worlds. These learning experiences give the children an understanding of the concepts, culture/ cultural awareness, cultural identity and cultural/ diverse perspectives. They are now ready to investigate and link ideas to other worlds.

Inter-textual Learning Experiences

Investigation 1: Small Group Work

Each group reads and responds to a different novel (Figure 3.6). The teacher focuses on aesthetic responses first by posing the following questions:

- What is your first reaction or response to the story? Describe it briefly.
- What emotions did you feel as you read the story?
- What would it feel like to be a character or participate in an event in the story.
- Have you ever experienced what a character in the story experienced?
- Do you think the story is a good one? Why, or why not? (Strong, 1998)

The children respond individually in a response journal and then compare ideas with the group. Then they respond to the following efferent questions:

- How does this book relate to the theme, Alien Worlds?
- Describe this alien world.(pictures, model or poetry or prose)
- Who thinks of it as alien? Explain why?
- Is there a change of feeling about this world or the people in it? Find evidence in the novel.

Again, the children use the think-pair -share structure (Lyman, 1992) to crystallize their initial responses, share with a partner and then their group by sharing, webbing, and comparing ideas. The children complete the learning experiences outlined in Figure 3.6. Upon completion, the children share their work with the class through dramatizations, displays or oral presentations.

Investigation 2: Individual Work

The children select novels from the recommended reading list (Appendix A-2) to read independently. They record the novels in their reading logs (Appendix C-4) and record their feelings and reactions to the novel in a response journal. The questions in Investigation 1 are answered independently. They share what they have learned through reading conferences (Appendix C-5) and book talks.

This exploration of other worlds may spark an interest in researching some of the cultural groups represented in the novels. Other children may want to create their own future world. (See additional learning experiences in Appendix B-10). Once they have shared their work, they are ready to link the concepts in these worlds to their own.

Lived-textual Learning Experiences (Figure 3.8)

The children examine their own experiences through a combination of independent, small group, and whole class activities by linking what they read to their own experiences. See the Lived-textual Web (Figure 3.8) and the additional learning experiences (Appendix B-10).

Investigation 1: What is my world like? (Culture, Cultural Awareness)

- Each group is assigned a learning experience from this strand. Upon completion, they share what they have done with the class. (When assigning the learning experiences, the teacher needs to ensure that each group investigate a different element of culture than they did for the intra-textual learning experiences (Figures 3.4, 3.5).
- Each child completes the cultural bubble activity (Appendix B-7)

- As a homework assignment, each child conducts an interview as described in the section, Attitudes (Figure 3.8).

Investigation 2: Who am I? (Cultural Identity)

- The class reads the short stories mentioned in the section: Family, Heritage, Nationality (Figure 3.8). The children independently complete one of the suggested activities for a homework assignment. They present their findings to the class.
- The children read the literature mentioned in the section: Sense of Belonging and complete the learning experiences (Figure 3.8).
- The class reads and discusses the poem, *Be Yourself* (Appendix B-8)
- The class plays multicultural bingo (Appendix B-6).

Investigation 3 What is my point of view? (Cultural/Diverse Perspectives)

- The teacher reads the picture book mentioned in the section: Point of View, to the class. They discuss the question. Each child completes the learning experience individually (Figure 3.8).

These learning experiences link the three main strands to their own experiences and relate these concepts to their own lives. They begin to look at their own world in a culturally conscious way. It is now time to bring everything that was learned together.

Stage 3: Culmination

This stage consists of consolidating the ideas, new knowledge, and insights.

- Children work together to answer the guiding question of the theme, *What is an alien world?* A think-pair share (Lyman, 1992) format is useful here. The children first answer the question independently. They share their answer with a partner. Revise it.

Join with other partners. Discuss and revise the answer again. Then each group shares their answer with the class. Ideas are recorded on a Web.

- The children complete the reflection sheet (Appendix B-8).
- Each child selects the literature that had the most impact on them and prepares a book talk and a response to share with the class.
- Each child writes an essay, poem, or draws a picture expressing something they have learned about themselves or others by exploring this theme.

Summary

This chapter gives the teacher a framework for implementing this thematic literature unit. Due to the open ended nature of this unit it is difficult to determine exactly how long the unit would take. The writer estimates approximately four to six weeks. However, the length and breadth of the unit will depend on the following factors:

1. The needs, interests and abilities of the children in the class.
2. The learning resources available.
3. The amount of time that can be allotted for the unit.

The children organize their work throughout all three stages in portfolios in this way the teacher, child and parent can assesses the cognitive and affective growth that has taken place throughout the unit. Appendix C for assessment and evaluation tools.

Chapter V outlines the writer's conclusions, insights and recommendations after completing this thematic literature unit. It also gives some recommendations for future work in this area.

CHAPTER V- CONCLUSIONS, INSIGHTS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For the writer, this project has been a voyage of discovery. It has meant reflection, research and questioning the existing curriculum and current practice in the school system. Putting together a thematic literature unit with the goal of developing children's global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others was a challenge. There were many questions to be answered, and searching for the learning resources to accomplish this goal was not an easy task.

In a global community, the ability to look at things from different perspectives and have a strong sense of personal and cultural identity is crucial for the world of today and the future. The writer realized very early in the voyage of discovery, there was no set way of reaching this destination. That is why this thematic literature unit was designed to be open-ended and flexible. It is not possible for one prescriptive curriculum unit to meet the needs of all children and solve all the problems in this area. There are too many factors influencing the direction the unit should take. However, this thematic literature unit is perhaps an approach to helping children understand the world around them and could be a beginning of many more explorations of this nature.

By approaching the concepts through children's literature, children are taking a voyage of discovery themselves. An exploration of these concepts in this way allows the children to take an active part in the direction their journey takes. By vicariously travelling to different worlds, children explore these concepts and discuss issues such as prejudice, discrimination, and problems adjusting to new places on a safe level. They are reading and responding to events that are far removed from themselves. Once these issues

are discussed in this way, it is easier to look closer to home. The children link their vicarious experiences to their personal experiences and examine issues that are relevant to them. They now look at their own world in a new way and choose in what direction their exploration goes.

In a thematic literature unit of this nature, the final destination is not fixed. The children may travel a long way towards reaching the goal or come to a dead end. It depends on how carefully the teacher chooses the departure point of the voyage and how comfortable the children are in exploring their own world. This unit includes many different options so the teacher may choose the literature and learning experiences that are best suited for the children in the class.

Insights

While working on this project, the writer often asked the question: "If it is so important to develop children's understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others, why are there not more units available to introduce children to these very important concepts?" Two roadblocks were identified:

1. Exclusion of Appropriate Topics in the Curriculum:

There is very little in the curriculum at the elementary and junior high levels that enables the children to look at culture from a personal level and realize it is a way of life. The concepts of cultural identity, cultural and diverse perspectives are not explored in depth.

2. Teacher Knowledge:

Many teachers do not know how to address issues such as children being left out because of their cultural differences. They are afraid they might offend a child or make the situation worse by bringing up such issues for discussion. Even trying to sort out the correct labels for different cultural groups (White or Caucasian, Black or African-American, Indian or Native American etc.) is not an easy task. This lack of knowledge makes it easier to ignore the issues and look at culture as merely food, festivals and fun. For example, make Ukrainian eggs at Easter or discuss different customs around the world at Christmas time. In this way, the teacher does not have to deal with issues such as prejudice, discrimination and culture clashes. It is a safe route to take.

Another problem for the teacher is how to approach concepts such as culture, cultural identity, cultural and diverse perspectives so children understand them? How can a teacher give the children an opportunity to discuss their own personal experiences and feelings related to these concepts? It involves more than including information about specific cultural groups in the curriculum. An example that demonstrates this point is one teacher's story of how she developed a unit on a Native American group. A child in her class had recently moved from a reserve of that particular culture. She felt he would be a valuable resource for the unit and would enjoy the opportunity to talk about his culture. However, he was reluctant to contribute any information and seemed uncomfortable during the unit. Sometimes teachers' best intentions do not work out. The question is how to build an awareness of culture, cultural identity and diverse cultural perspectives without emphasizing the differences between cultural groups?

These roadblocks show that developing a unit like this is not an easy task. This chapter discusses the knowledge the writer gained as she attempted to find a way of overcoming these problems. It also makes some recommendations for educators to encourage further exploration in this area.

Designing A Thematic Literature Unit

As the writer was designing this thematic literature unit, she identified four reasons why it was such a challenge.

1. Choosing a Goal

First, the goal of developing children's global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others is very broad and abstract. In order to be effective the unit could not be designed in a prescriptive way. It needed to be open-ended and have flexibility so the teacher and children would have some choice in which direction to take. The writer realized that this goal would be suitable for an entire curriculum. One unit is not sufficient. Throughout their school life children need opportunities to read, respond to literature and reflect on their own life experiences so they learn to look at themselves and others in new ways.

2. Selecting Learning Outcomes:

The learning outcomes in the 1997 draft copy of the *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Social Studies Curriculum Document* (Department of Education, 1997) are not very clear. In many cases, the outcomes make broad statements about expectations of what children should be able to do. However, the concepts and terms themselves are not defined. For example, What does it mean when it states, "the children are expected to

provide examples of material and nonmaterial elements of culture?(p.24)." How is culture defined? The writer found she did not have a clear understanding of the concepts and terms in the outcomes themselves. If teachers do not understand the concepts stated in the Department of Education Curriculum Guide and are not provided with definitions, how can they help children gain an understanding of them? Without clarification of the concepts, developing learning outcomes that express the intentions of the unit is not an easy task. Developing the conceptual framework for this unit took a lot of reflection.

3. Length of Time to Develop a Unit

It takes time to take an idea and develop it into a package of linked learning experiences that will explore a particular theme. Time is often the barrier to many of the initiatives teachers would like to undertake.

4. Selecting Learning Resources

The selection of learning resources for this unit was a voyage of discovery in itself. The writer realized she needed learning resources that did more than give information about specific cultural groups. The resources needed to give insight into the feelings and emotions underlying a culture, and show different points of view. Children's literature was a natural place to look. Children's literature helps children to become acquainted with the characters and their problems. It gives them insight into the humanness of all people. Multicultural literature, in particular, enables the children to read about people from culturally different backgrounds and vicariously experience how they live. It gives the readers insight into the culture of these people.

However, a multicultural book should not be selected just because it gives information about a specific culture. It should be looked upon in terms of the meaning the reader takes from the book; the emotional and intellectual response the reader has to it; the relevance that he/she thinks it has to his/her lives (Bishop, 1994, p. xvii). Therefore, the children's books chosen for this unit are good stories about people trying to overcome problems. Suzanne Lo and Ginny Lee (1993) sum up these ideas when they stated, "We need stories that portray the full range of human emotion for all cultures. We need protagonists with individuality, not cardboard cutouts. They need to be endowed with humour, strength and drive, as are the protagonists of the best literature for children" (p. 16).

Once the writer had a sense of the kind of book she was looking for she realized that science fiction also has a place in developing children's global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others as well. Science fiction gives the children an opportunity to explore the concepts of culture, cultural awareness and diverse perspectives in a fictitious world. They can explore beliefs and values from a neutral position. No one feels threatened or uncomfortable. By reading books like The Giver (Lowry) children realize that the past is an important part of the present. The past gives life its richness and color. This book does not teach about a cultural group, but it gives children an understanding of the essence of what a culture is. In The Keeper of the Isis Light (Hughes) children can discuss why the keeper of the light was not accepted by the new settlers. Issues such as prejudice can be explored in a fictitious world. This makes it easier for children to discuss their feelings and opinions openly and frankly. Once they

are ready, they can link their new insights to the real world. Science fiction has the potential for helping children explore concepts such as culture, cultural identity, cultural and diverse perspectives in a different way. Teachers need to be cognitive of various literary works that will develop an understanding of these concepts and develop in children a more global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others.

However, having the resources is not sufficient to develop children's cultural awareness, cultural identity and the ability to look at situations from diverse perspectives. Children do not develop this awareness merely by reading the books. They need to be active participants in responding, reflecting, comparing and drawing conclusions about what they have read. In this way, books help children compare different cultures, understand problems of moving from one culture to another and see how cultures change and are transmitted. Stories are a reflection of culture. As children see how the needs of people are met and how problems are overcome, they develop a more global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others. Therefore, it is important to develop units in which children are actively involved in discussing, questioning and reflecting on what they read.

Teacher Attitude

A teacher's attitude is the most important factor in ensuring that units of this kind are implemented at all levels of the curriculum. Teachers need to realize the important role children's literature can play in developing children's understanding of themselves and others. Teachers need to be aware of the needs of all children in the classroom and look

beyond their own perspectives. They should search for high quality literature that will open children's eyes to their culture and cultures around the world. They need to find ways to help children retain a healthy respect and pride for their heritage. Teachers need to realize all children should learn to appreciate and understand cultural differences among their peers and grow into adults who can look beneath the surface of outward appearance and realize the humanness in everyone. Teachers have a responsibility to select books that promote open and accepting attitudes of all people, regardless of their nationality and race. In order to break down stereotypes, teachers need first, to develop an awareness of their own attitudes, and secondly recognize when and how literature can build knowledge about oneself and others.

Recommendations

This project demonstrates that a great deal more work is required in the area of developing children's global understanding, acceptance and knowledge of themselves and others. It has only scratched the surface of a very significant issue. Therefore, the writer, not as an expert but as a classroom teacher makes the following recommendations:

1. Educators need to examine their own attitudes and values and determine what they know about different cultural groups.
2. Terms (culture, cultural awareness, multiculturalism etc.) need to be clarified and defined and ways of helping children understand them need to be explored.
3. Educators need to look critically at the existing curriculum and make sure that it includes a variety of children's literature and learning experiences that will help children become more aware of themselves and others.

4. Educators need to search for high quality children's literature that give children insight into these issues. Perhaps educators could form literature circles in which they read and respond to literature themselves and discuss ways of using it in the classroom.
5. The concepts of culture, cultural awareness, cultural identity, cultural and diverse perspectives need to be woven into the curriculum from kindergarten to Grade 12. One unit cannot do justice to ensuring children understand themselves and others.
6. Children need to have plenty of opportunities to bring their own world into the classroom. They need time to reflect, discuss, compare and respond to their feelings about their culture and their cultural identity.
7. The curriculum documents compiled at the Department of Education need to be made more user friendly so teachers can select learning outcomes for units quickly. They need to be worded in a clear and concise manner and terminology should be defined.
8. More thematic literature units of this nature need to be developed. These units need to be flexible and open -ended so they include something for every one. It takes time to think about how to translate abstract ideas into concrete experiences that the children can understand. Until time is taken to do this, the curriculum will not meet the needs of all children in the class.

These recommendations demonstrate that teachers need to be more involved in curriculum design. Teachers have to take the lead in searching for more relevant curriculum materials and designing thematic units that do more than merely pay lip-service to addressing the cultural issues in our world today. In a rapidly changing global

community, educators have to adapt and revise the curriculum so that it meets all children's needs no matter where they live.

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APPENDIX A

A - 1 Annotated Bibliography of Children's Literature cited in
Thematic Literature Unit

A-2 Recommended Novels for the Thematic Literature Unit

Appendix A-1: Annotated Bibliography of Children's Literature Cited in the Unit

Novels

Historical Fiction

Clark, Joan. (1995). The Dream Carvers. Toronto: Puffin Books.

The story of a Norse boy, Thrand who is captured by the Beothuck in the 11th Century. He finally learns to adjust to his different way of life and adopts the culture of his new people.

Horne, Constance. (1998). The Accidental Orphan.

Elspeth finds herself taken away to the New World where she has to adjust to a different way of life in Canada. She is determined to prove that she is not an orphan.

Little, Jean. (1972). From Anna. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Anna, a German girl and her family are forced to leave Germany in 1933. They settle in Canada. Anna learns to accept her new world, language and different but most of all her family recognize her for who she is.

Little, Jean. (1997). The Belonging Place. Toronto: Viking.

Elspet Mary, an orphan tells her story of her adoption into her uncle's family after her mother dies. They live in Aberdeen Scotland then immigrate to Upper Canada. She tells about her reluctance to leave Scotland, the terrible journey to the New World, and the adjustment of living in a strange place. As the title suggests, she discovers the place where she belongs, her family.

Lunn, Janet. (1986). Shadow in Hawthorn Bay. Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys.

A story about a young girl in search of her identity as she struggles to live in Upper Canada in 1815.

Winner the 1986 Canada Council Award, The 1987 Young Adult Canadian Book Award and the IODE Book Award.

Pearson, Kit. (1989) The Sky is Falling.

Norah and her brother Gavin are sent to live in Canada as war guests during World War II. The novel relates the struggles Norah has to adjust to her new home.

Speare George, Elizabeth. (1983) The Sign of the Beaver. New York: Dell Publishing.

Matt is responsible for looking after his families' new homestead while his father goes back to get his mother and sister. As he struggles to survive in an unfamiliar environment, a member of the Beaver Clan saves his life and he returns the favour by teaching his son how to read. Matt learns to look at life from another perspective and learns to respect the ways of the Attean's people.

Realistic Fiction

Collura, Mary-Ellen Lang. (1984) Winners. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Western Producer Prairie Books.

Jordy Threebears, a fifteen year old boy returns to the Ash Creek Reserve to live with his grandfather. At first he finds the adjustment difficult, however, the gift of a wild mare helps him come to terms with his identity.

Ellis, Sarah. (1989). Next Door Neighbours. Vancouver/Toronto. A Ground Wood Book.

Douglas & McIntyre.

Peggy has to adjust to living in the city, going to a new school and making new friends. She makes friends with two people who are not only new to the neighbourhood but who have immigrated to Canada.

Hughes, Monica. (1983). My Name is Paula Popowich.

Paula wishes she could look more like her blond, beautiful mother. She has never known her father and her mother will not talk about her past. When they move to western Canada, she gets to know her grandmother and finds out about her Ukrainian heritage.

Katz, Welwyn Wilton. (1997). Out of the Dark. Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas &

McIntyre.

Ben and his family move to Ship Cove, a small community in Newfoundland from Ottawa. Ben's fascination for the Vikings helps him come to terms with living in new place and the recent loss of his mother.

Paulsen, Gary. (1985). Dogsong. New York: Scholastic.

Russell Suskitt learns about his heritage through an old man in the village. He escapes his modern way of life in search for his identity.

Spinelli, Jerry. (1990). Maniac Magee. Toronto: Scholastic Inc.

Maniac Magee is a homeless boy who becomes a legend in both white East End and black West End of a community called Twin Mills. As a character, he shows respect and appreciation for people no matter what their background is.

Science Fiction

Danziger, Paula. (1986). This Place Has No Atmosphere. New York: Delacorte Press.

Aurora, a fifteen year old girl has a perfect life in the year 2057 until her parents Decide to become settlers on the moon. She has to leave her friends and adjust to living in a place with no atmosphere.

Hughes, Monica. (1980). The Keeper of the Isis Light. London: Hamish Hamilton.

A sixteen year old girl, Olwen has grown up alone on the planet, Isis with only Guardian to keep her company. When eighty settlers from earth arrive, she discovers what it is like to be truly alone in her own world.

Hughes, Monica. (1986) The Dream Catcher. Toronto: Methuen

It is the year 2047 and Ruth lives inside the protective Dome of Ark Three. Everything is orderly and runs according to plan. However, her peers reject her because she disrupts the Web, a joining of psychic minds. by her dreams of people outside her world. Finally, her people take the risk to search other worlds.

Lowry, Lois.(1994). The Giver New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books

Twelve year old, Jonas lives in a perfect world where there is no pain, crime or violence. Everyone is treated equally and fairly, as long as they follow the rules. However, when Jonas questions the beliefs and attitudes of the people around him and searches for a way to change their way of life.

Walsh, Jill Paton (1981). The Green Book. London: MacMillan Children's Books.

Pattie and her family move to a planet far away from Earth. They learn to survive in an alien physical world which although is beautiful does not at first seem to have the materials needed for survival.

Picture Books

Say, Allen. (1993). Grandfather's Journey. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

A grandfather reminisces about his life in both Japan and America. It describes his love of both very different ways of life. He has a constant desire to being in both places at once.

Say, Allen. (1991) Tree of Cranes. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

A story about a boy's very first Christmas in Japan. His mother shares with him the tradition of decorating a Christmas tree and receiving gifts.

Wallace, Ian. & Wood, Angela. (1975). The Sandwich. Toronto: Kids Can Press.

Vincenzo Ferrante learns how to cope with the other children in the class who laugh at his "stinky" meat at lunch time.

Yee, Paul. (1991). Roses Sing on New Snow. A Delicious Tale. Vancouver: A Groundwood Book.

Maylin cooks for her father and two lazy brothers in Chinatown in the New World. When the Governor tastes her dish, Roses Sing On new Snow. he wants to take it back to the emperor in China. Maylin demonstrates that it is a dish only for the new World.

Short Stories

Barnhouse, D.P. (1984) *Knowing Anna*. In Star Flights. Scarborough, Ont: Nelson

Anna is adjusting to a new life in a new country. She is not accepted by the girls in her dance class because she cannot speak English well and she appears to be different.

Charles, Norma.(1998). *The Harmonica*. In Winds Through Time: An Anthology of Canadian Historical Young Adult Fiction.(ed.) Ann Walsh. Vancouver: A Sand Castle Book.

Ben is an orphan who has come to Canada in search of a new and better life. When his new master mistreats him, he realizes he must find his freedom somewhere else.

Colville, Bruce. *Old Glory*.(1991). In 2041:Twelve Short Stories about the Future. (ed.)

Jane Yolen. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

A boy tells a story of being ashamed of his great grandfather who stands up against the rules of society.

Hatashita-Lee. (1998). *Remember, Chrysanthemum*. In Winds Through Time: An Anthology of Canadian Historical Young Adult Fiction. (ed.) Ann Walsh. Vancouver: A Sand Castle Book.

Allison learns about her heritage when her grandmother shows her pictures and tells her about how the Japanese Canadians were treated after 1941.

Hunter, Bernice Thurman. (1984). *The Family Album*. In Star Flights (ed.) J. McInnes.

M. Garry, E. Hearn, M. Hughes. Scarborough, ON: Nelson Canada.

A collection of short stories that trace the roots of a girl who discovered she did have family ties.

Waldron, Kathleen, Cook. (1998). *One Candle, Many Lights*. In Winds Through Time:

An Anthology of Canadian Historical Young Adult Fiction. (ed.) Ann Walsh.

Vancouver: A Sand Castle Book.

A Jewish child struggles with an assignment the teacher gives the class on Christmas traditions.

Wilson, John. (1998). *Shadows of the Past*. In Winds Through Time: An Anthology of

Canadian Historical Young Adult Fiction. (ed.) Ann Walsh. Vancouver: A Sand

Castle Book.

Sarah reads a letter written by her great, great grandmother and learns what life was like in the past.

Appendix A-2: Recommended Novels for the Thematic Literature Unit

Historical Fiction

- Clark, Joan. (1995). The Dream Carvers. Toronto: Puffin Books.
- Horne, Constance. (1998). The Accidental Orphan. Vancouver: Beach Holme Publishing.
- Kogawa, Joy. (1986). Naomi's Road. Illustrated by Matt Gould. Toronto: Oxford.
- Little, Jean. (1972). From Anna. New York: Harper & Row Publishing.
- Little, Jean. (1997). The Belonging Place. Toronto: Viking.
- Lotteridge, Celia Barker. (1992). Ticket to Curlew. Toronto: Groundwood.
- Lunn Janet. (1986). Shadow in Hawthorn Bay. Toronto: Lester and Open
Dennys.
- Paperny, Myra. (1987). The Wooden People. Toronto: Overlea House.
- Parry, Caroline. (1994). Eleanor's Diary: The Journals of a Canadian Pioneer Girl.
Richmond Hill ON: Scholastic.

- Pearson, Kit (1989). The Sky Is Falling. Markham, Ontario: Penguin.
- Speare, Elizabeth George. (1983). The Sign of the Beaver. New York: Deli Publishing.
- Wiseman, Eva. (1996). A Place Not Home. Toronto: Stoddart.

Realistic Fiction

- Collura, Mary -Ellen. (1984). Winners. Saskatchewan: Western Producer Prairie Books.
- Ellis, Sarah. (1989) Next Door Neighbours. Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre.
- Heneghan, James. (1994). Torn Away. New York: Viking.
- Hughes, Monica. (1983). My Name is Paula Popowich.

Katz, Welwyn Wilton. (1997). Out of the Dark. Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre.

Sawyer, Don. (1988). Where the River Meets. Winnipeg: Pemmican Publishing Inc.

Spinelli, Jerry. (1990). Maniac Magee. Toronto: Scholastic Inc.

Science Fiction

Danziger, Paula (1986). This Place has No Atmosphere. New York: Delacorte Press.

Hughes, Monica. (1980). The Keeper of the Isis Light. London: H. Hamish.

_____ (1986). The Dream Catcher. Toronto: Methuen.

Lowry, Lois. (1994). The Giver. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books.

Walsh, Jill Paton. (1981). The Green Book. London: MacMillan Children's Books.

APPENDIX B

Resources for Thematic Literature Unit

B-1: Beliefs of a Culture

B-2: Material Elements of a Culture

B-3: Evidence of Cultural Influences

B-4: Role of Men and Women

B-5: Comparison of Cultures

B-6: Multicultural Bingo

B-7: Cultural Bubble

B-8: Poem: *Be Yourself*

B-9: Reflection Sheet

B-10: Additional Learning Experiences

Appendix B-1: Beliefs of a Culture

Name: _____ Culture: _____

Beliefs	Evidence from Story

Appendix B-3: Evidence of Cultural Influences

Positive Influences	Negative Influences

Appendix B-5: Comparison of Cultures

Elements of the culture						
Physical Environment						
Shelter						
Institutions						
Food						
Clothing						
Transportation						
Language						
Beliefs /Attitudes						
Education						
Customs/ Behaviours						
Festivals						
Other						

Appendix B-6: Multicultural Bingo

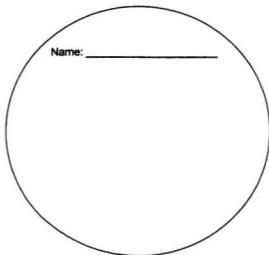
Find someone who ...

B	I	N	G	O
Has moved from another country	Speaks another language besides French	Enjoys reading about other cultures	Can name the two official languages of Canada	Can name four countries from which immigrants have come to Canada
Has eaten food from another country	Can trace their family's roots for three generations	Can tell a story from their family's past	Can give a Newfoundland saying or expression	Has a grandparent who immigrated to Canada
Can name four important beliefs for Canadians	Has taken part in another culture's festival or tradition	Can perform a traditional dance	Can sing a traditional song from any culture	Can define the term culture

Appendix B-7: Cultural Bubble

A Cultural Bubble (Jobe 1993)

Draw a picture of yourself inside the bubble. Write things that have influenced you around the bubble. The most important things go nearest the bubble. The less important things placed further away. Discuss your cultural bubble with a partner. Share it with your group. List the common things around each bubble. Discuss the differences. What things have had the most influence on you?



Appendix B-8: Poem: *Be Yourself*

Be Yourself

The world would like to change you
There are pressures all around,
You must decide just who you are
Then firmly hold your ground,
You have an image of yourself
An ideal sense of you,
And to this vision you must always
Struggle to be true.
You know what you are good at
And you know where your talents lie:
But if you are ruled by others
Your uniqueness could pass you by,
Remember, there is much to learn;
But all new things aren't good
Wisdom lies in what you have understood.
So, be yourself and don't allow
The world to take control
Preserving your identity
Is life's most precious goal.

(author unknown)

{reprinted from the NLTA Social Studies Special Interest Council Newsletter, 1998}

Appendix B-9: Reflection Sheet**These novels make me:**

Think _____

Realize _____

Understand _____

Wish _____

Appendix B-10: Additional Learning Experiences

Culture/Cultural Awareness

1. Design your own model culture of the future, keeping the following aspects in mind:

- Physical Environment - Describe location of the community (another planet, desert, underground, under water), the landscape, the climate.
- Material Elements
 - food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and technology (Build a model or draw large illustrations)
- Non-material Elements
 - beliefs and attitudes (Link these to the environment - What beliefs would be important for survival?)
 - customs and behaviours (Link this to where they live e.g. Festival of the Milky Way.)
 - language - make a mini dictionary for visitors
 - games and stories - write a story or design a game suited to this culture
 - heritage - Describe briefly where these people originated.
 - a name (its significance) (L.O. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10,11)

2. Present your culture to the class. (L.O. 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10,11)

3. Compare the different cultural groups. Record information on a chart

(Appendix B- 5). (L.O. 1, 2, 3,4, 9, 12)

4. Imagine moving from your cultural group to another. Describe how you feel and what adjustments you have to make. Write a letter home describing what it is like.
(L.O. 9, 11, 12, 17)
5. Write a play in which the different cultural groups meet each other. This can be based on one of the novels you have read, real life experiences or the imaginary cultures you have created. How would each group react? What problems would they have? How would they resolve them? (L.O. 1, 4, 9, 10, 17, 18)
7. Research any cultural group of Canada. Describe all the aspects of their culture through pictures and written description. Share it with the class.
(L.O. 1, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11)
8. Play Multicultural Bingo. Circulate around the school and find people who can sign each of the squares on your sheet (Appendix B-6). (L.O. 1, 3, 4, 9, 15)
10. Critical literacy
 - Watch some television shows and look for cultural assumptions. (e.g. all African American people are great dancers) (L.O. 1, 2, 3, 4, 17)
 - Find examples of stereotyping, prejudice, labeling/categorizing individuals and groups. (e.g. all blondes are dumb) (L.O. 1, 2, 3, 4, 17.)
11. Invite a guest speaker from another culture to share information about his/her culture.
(L.O. 3, 4, 11)
12. Read Rose Sings on New Snow (Yee) How do cultures evolve as people move to new worlds? (L.O. 1, 3, 4, 13)

Cultural Identity

13. Ask a person who has recently immigrated to Canada to talk about their cultural heritage and the similarities and differences between Canada and his/her original home. Where is home for them now? (L.O 3, 4, 12,)
14. Complete the cultural bubble activity (Appendix B-7). Read the poem: *Be Yourself* (Appendix B-8). List the qualities that make you unique. Write a poem or a paragraph describing the important things that make you who you are. (L.O. 5, 7, 9, 10, 15, 16)
15. Read *My Name is Paula Popowich* or *Dogsong*. What problem does the main character have living in his/her world? Look for evidence in the novel. (L.O. 5, 9, 11) Who helps this character come to terms with his/her heritage? Write a letter from the main character explaining why it is important for them to know about his/her heritage. (L.O. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 15, 16)
15. Define the term cultural identity. (L.O. 1, 2, 4, 15)

Cultural and Diverse Perspectives

16. Write a poem or an essay to express how a person is struggling with the conflict between him/herself and others. (L.O. 5, 7, 9, 10, 17, 18)
17. With a partner, prepare a debate, or skit showing how two people had different ways of interpreting the same event. (L.O. 1, 5, 7, 9, 17, 18)
18. Write a letter to another person to persuade him/her that your point of view is right. Write the response. (L.O 5, 7, 9, 17, 18)

Integrated Cultural Learning Experiences

20. How are the worlds you have created and read about similar to the many different cultures we have in Canada and the world? What do they all have in common? How can we help people from different cultures have a greater understanding of each other? How can we bridge the gap between alien worlds?

(L.O. 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 12, 18)

21. Write an essay, poem or draw a picture about one of the following topics:

What is an Alien World?

Different Cultural Practices are not Better or Worse, only Different.

(L.O 9, 10, 11, 15, 17)

22. Prepare a book talk on a book you read during this unit. Explain why this book gives the reader insight into the theme, *Alien Worlds*. You can present your ideas in a variety of ways (picture, dramatization, monologue or a model).

(L.O 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.)

23. Complete the reflection sheet about the novels you read during this unit

(Appendix B-9).

APPENDIX C

Assessment and Evaluation Tools

C-1: Speaking and Listening Log of Activities

C-2: Speaking and Listening Checklist

C-3: Evaluation of Group Presentations

C-4: Student Reading Log Record

C-5: Individual Reading Conference Record

C-6: Log of Writing Activities

C-7: Individual Writing Conference Record

C-8: Checklist of Social Studies Outcomes

C-9: Small Group Evaluation Form

C-10: Sample Letter to Parents

Appendix C -2: Speaking and Listening Checklist

Speaking and Listening Skills Checklist

Theme: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Rating 1-5 (excellent)

Rating

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Contributes thoughts, ideas and questions to discussion | _____ |
| 2. Asks and responds to questions to seek clarification | _____ |
| 3. Defends or supports their own opinions with evidence | _____ |
| 4. Listens carefully to others' ideas, opinions and points of view | _____ |
| 5. Contributes to and responds constructively in conversation,
small group and whole class discussions. | _____ |
| 6. Listens attentively and demonstrates awareness of the needs,
rights, feelings of others. | _____ |

Appendix C-3: Evaluation of Group Presentations

Topic: _____

Names of students: _____

Content of Presentation	Comments	Mark
Description of elements of culture		/20
Relationship of culture to environment		/10
Organization of ideas		/10
Creativity of content		/10
Effectiveness of Presentation	Comments	Mark
Use of visuals to explain ideas		/20
Clarity of voices		/10
Audience appeal		/5
Group Work	Comments	Mark
Shared responsibility for presentation		/10
Efficiency of presentation		/5
Cooperation in preparing presentation		/10

Final Mark: _____

Comments: _____

Appendix C-5: Individual Reading Conference Record

Name: _____

Date	Book Title	Author/Illustrator	Conference with:
Comments			

Date	Book Title	Author/Illustrator	Conference with:
Comments			

Date	Book Title	Author/Illustrator	Conference with:
Comments			

Adapted from Booth and Phenix Assessment and Evaluation (1994)

Appendix C-7: Individual Writing Conference Record

Name: _____

Date	Writing Topic	Conference with:
Comments		

Date	Writing Topic	Conference with:
Comments		

Date	Writing Topic	Conference with:
Comments		

Adapted from Booth and Phenix Assessment and Evaluation (1994)

Appendix C-8: Checklist of Social Studies Outcomes

Social Studies Outcomes

Theme: _____

Name of student: _____ Date: _____

The student:

1. Can explain the concept of culture _____
2. Can provide examples of elements of culture _____
3. Has explored similarities and differences in ways cultures meet human needs and wants. _____
4. Understands how cultures change and are transmitted. _____
5. Demonstrates an understanding of the concept, cultural identity. _____
6. Can show how family, heritage and nationality contribute to cultural identity. _____
7. Understands how a person's culture determines how one views the world. _____
8. Can demonstrate how people from different cultural groups can interpret experiences in various ways. _____

Comments: _____



