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Learning to Live and Living to Learn: An Exploration of Human Relations in the Classroom

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**LEARNING TO LIVE AND
LIVING TO LEARN:
AN EXPLORATION OF HUMAN
RELATIONS
IN THE CLASSROOM**

A Thesis

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Designation

University Honors with Distinction

Stephanie Lynn Orth

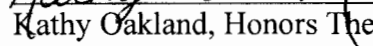
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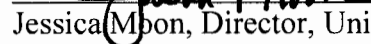
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Entitled: Learning to Live and Living to Learn: An Exploration of Human Relations in the Classroom has been approved as meeting the thesis or project requirement for the Designation University Honors with Distinction.

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Learning to Live and Living to Learn: An Exploration of Human Relations in the Classroom

In 1999, there were 104,000 arrests of people under age 18 for a serious violent crime--robbery, forcible rape, aggravated assault, or homicide (Snyder, 1999). About 9% of murders in the U.S. were committed by youth under 18 in 2000 (Fox & Zawitz, 2000). Youth under 18 accounted for about 15% of violent crime arrests in 2001 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2002). One national survey found that for every teen arrested, at least 10 were engaged in violence that could have seriously injured or killed another person (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). About 1 in 3 high school students say they have been in a physical fight in the past year, and about 1 in 8 of those students required medical attention for their injuries (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2001). More than 1 in 6 students in grades 6 to 10 say they are bullied sometimes, and more than 1 in 12 say they are bullied once a week or more (Nansel, et al., 2001). (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, 2006)

Introduction

There has never been a time in which human relations was in greater demand.

Youth violence is prevalent in and out of the school setting, and the increasing trends of disturbing violence statistics do not stop with youth. Adults and youth alike are living in and contributing to a society consumed by violence: violence in video games, on television, in the news, on the street, in the schools, in the workplace, and in the home (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006). Society still manages to survive, but there is a question of how long.

Human relations can be defined as “the development of positive interactions between individuals or groups” (Sleeter & Grant, 76). Human relations is sometimes referred to in schools as multicultural education, nonsexist education, language education, etc., but human relations is more than one single topic. It is a term to

encompass many topics including race, culture, language, class, gender, and disability (30). It is also used as a way to build community, talk with students about peer pressure, and teach character education including ethics, morals, and values (Martin & Johri, 95). At the foundation of excellent human relations is communication; it the foundation for building relationships of any kind (Gazda, Balzer, et al., 36).

The demand for a society with a greater grasp of proper human relations is prevalent, but how can this demand be met? When should human relations be taught, who should teach it, in what setting should it be addressed, and how should such a delicate and important topic be approached?

Schools were established to teach fundamentals and the pressing needs of society. For example, the invention of the printing press required that citizens be able to read what was printed. When money was introduced as currency, the need for math skills became of greater importance. As science knowledge and knowledge of the human body is increased, so is the need for health education. (Lane, 87).

With the development of technology such as the airplane, the atomic bomb, and the Internet, the world is becoming more and more globalized (Lane, 87). Technology has made killing and causing pain more impersonal than ever before. A whole town can be destroyed with the push of a button, an email can be sent to deliver bad news, and poison can be sent through the mail (88). The globalization taking place has caused the need for knowledge of how to live and work together in a chaotic society (87). The relative shrinking of the world has caused a great phenomenon. Never before have the actions of one person in the world been able to so greatly impact others across the globe (88).

President Truman realized the potential of humans in today's society as he spoke his inaugural address, "For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and skill to relieve the suffering of these people" (Lane, 89). Great potential can only be met, however, if the knowledge and skills possessed by humankind are used for this purpose.

Teaching human relations in schools is the only way to insure egocentrism is left for altruism. That is, to insure that people start to think of others instead of only themselves (Lane, 109). Many people have lost any obligation to serve anyone beyond themselves (Damon, 38). Students feel less responsible for their actions today, than in the past. Teaching students a sense of altruism is the only way to ensure that both new and current world knowledge of facts, concepts, and inventions are used to relieve suffering, as President Truman described, and not to cause it (Lane, 89).

Therefore, human relations is the basis for all other content needed in our curriculum and serves as the foundation for all content areas (Lane, 106). This does not mean, however, that teaching human relations skills should replace instructional time or necessary material in other content areas; they should be integrated into all subjects to expose students to appropriate human relations behaviors in all aspects of life in a society. Human relations is important, but should not be the primary focus of national education. "It should not interfere with the school's responsibility to ensure our children's mastery of American literate culture" (Hirsch, 18). Students need knowledge of facts, ideas, concepts, and principles in order to apply human relations skills in real life. Students need to gain more knowledge and learn to use that knowledge to help others and get along with individuals of every culture (Lane, 117).

History of Human Relations

Human relations is not a new topic for the school curriculum and there is not one uniform approach to teaching human relations in the classroom (Sleeter & Grant, 30).

Over time, the best practices in teaching human relations have evolved with the rest of the curriculum, but there are still a variety of methods used, some more effectively than others.

Gibson, a researcher, found four approaches commonly used to teach human relations. He then suggested a fifth approach, which he saw as the best way to enhance human relations. The approaches he identified are different mainly in the underlying assumptions and goals of the instruction and in the depth of the integration of human relations into the curriculum: (a) education of culturally different, which seeks to incorporate students of diverse backgrounds into the mainstream culture, (b) education about cultural differences, which seeks to educate all students about cultural difference, (c) education for cultural pluralism, which seeks to preserve minority cultures and increase the power of minority groups, and (d) bicultural education, which seeks to prepare students to participate successfully in two cultures (Sleeter & Grant, 30). The fifth approach Gibson suggested was using multicultural education as the normal human experience, which seeks to teach students to function in a variety of settings, cultural or otherwise (30).

Pratte identified four similar approaches in his research detailing how human relations are taught. They range from surface level education to in depth instruction and are similar to Gibson's approaches, (Sleeter & Grant, 103): (a) restricted multicultural education which seeks to "correct" the problems of students with differences, (b)

modified multicultural education, which seeks to promote equality between all students, (c) unrestricted multicultural education, which seeks to teach students to identify with individuals from other cultures, and (d) modified, unrestricted multicultural education, which seeks to prepare students to be active participants in a diverse, democratic society (30).

Sleeter & Grant suggest yet another typology of approaches. They have different names, but they are based on many of the same observations as Gibson and Pratte's typologies (31). The first was prevalent in the 1960's, teaching the exceptionally and culturally different. This was a differentiated instruction approach that served to teach students differently, based on their differences. It did not serve to educate each cultural group of the qualities and values of the others, but instead, served to instruct each cultural group about their own culture, using methods best suited to that particular cultural norm.

During World War II, the human relations approach was catapulted to the front of educational philosophies. The focus on human relations became stronger because it was used as a tool to build the effort toward anti-discrimination (Sleeter & Grant, 78). Anti-discrimination organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Urban League, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and the National Conference of Christians and Jews pushed the need for such topics to be addressed in legislation (79). The human relations approach at this time focused on love, respect, and communication. Every student was trained to understand, communicate, and value varying perspectives (Sleeter & Grant, 77). This era was the basis for modern human relations as it is known today, but now it encompasses a greater range of ideas (30).

In the 1970s, the focus shifted to a multicultural education approach. Human diversity was celebrated and equal opportunity was the fight (Sleeter & Grant, 153). Classrooms studied one single group of people at a time, and the differences between these groups and the students in the classroom (111). One problem with this approach, however, is that it focuses on one single group: women, for example. This gives the illusion that sexism is only a problem for women. Similarly, the idea that racism is only a problem for African Americans was presented. This approach did not develop discussion, emphasize the appropriate way to use discussion as a basis for social action (219), or prepare students to make changes (220).

Later in the 70s and into the 1980s, this approach was broadened to include social action to remedy these issues. The new approach was appropriately named “education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist.” Students not only learned about different cultural groups and the importance of equal opportunity, but they were taught to practice their values and beliefs by taking action (189). Human relations education needs to address current issues and teach students to take an active stance in order to learn to work collaboratively, to speak out and be heard, and to effect change. Human relations education should support educating oneself and research of the issues (221).

Human Relations at an Early Age

Prejudice, as with almost everything else a child learns, starts early with what a child sees and hears around them, so human relations needs to move toward targeting youth, not only with legislation, but in schools. “By age two or three, children are aware of visible differences among people, including skin color, physical impairment, and gender” (Sleeter & Grant, 81).

At the same time children are learning language, they learn how to categorize this new language in their minds. With the language also come connotations, either positive or negative. Children learn this connotation often before they have a category for the language used, so stereotypes and prejudice occur (Sleeter & Grant, 81). Language and associated connotations come from any environment the child encounters, and many children are in school with their teachers more than they are home with their parents. Therefore, school needs to be a place where they are taught how to have positive interactions with others, as well as a place where they see and hear such positive interactions in practice (Martin & Johri, 97).

Human relations is not merely a set of special qualities born into certain chosen souls or traits that can be inherited through DNA. It may seem that some individuals were not blessed with human relations skills, but that is because they were not taught to have them. Human relations require the development of the mind and the heart (Sleeter & Grant, 76). Humans are born with egocentrism. They only learn to relate to others by being taught to do so. Being taught to have altruism, an ability to understand the feelings of others, allows people to put themselves in the place of others (Lane, 109). Teachers, parents, and members of the community can teach altruism by insisting on it in the classroom, in the home, and in the community. "We must develop skills that enable us to recognize our common humanity, as well as acknowledge and respect individual differences. Studying human relations in the classroom helps individuals to learn these skills" (Sleeter & Grant, 76).

The Teacher's Role in Human Relations

While some teachers and experts disagree on the perfect approach to teaching human relations, they tend to agree that modeling positive human relations, and creating a classroom where the same is expected from students, is a necessary component (Martin & Johri, 97). It involves reexamining some of the basic personal, group, and societal values, beliefs, attitudes, philosophies, and roles as educators. A teacher must move beyond a monocultural and ethnocentric approach if they are to properly teach and model human relations (Gazda, Balzer, et al., 31). Students will notice if what teachers teach and what their actions portray are different (Showalter, 39).

Martin and Johri list 7P's to whom the classroom teacher should model proper human relations: professional teachers, peers, principles, public, pupils, professionals, parents, and private self (104). The classroom teacher is an especially strong role model for students in many areas of their life (97). "Students will learn better if we not only explain what skills and techniques we expect them to master, but also show them models and examples" (Showalter, 55). Teachers who make an effort to support and teach human relations create an atmosphere of positive human relations in their classroom that students can carry with them throughout their lives (Martin & Johri, 98). Human relations involves both teachers and students, but also, as the 7Ps show, parents and community members (95). It must begin within the four walls of the classroom, at a young age, and then move out to larger groups within the school and the community (Cummings, 50).

The most effective teachers function as insiders in the community where they teach; that is, they endorse values, perspectives, behaviors, beliefs, and knowledge of

community and cultures within the community (Banks, 243). At the core of a classroom where excellent human relations thrive is “building respect for oneself and one’s potential and for others in all major and minor events in classroom life” (Martin & Johri, 97). Teachers who are experts in teaching and facilitating human relations in their classroom “understand learning styles and create instruction adaptive to diverse learners” (97).

In most cases, great human relations teachers do not have training beyond their undergraduate study. These teachers use practices that make good teachers in all content areas. Students are held accountable for their actions and teachers communicate high expectations (Martin & Johri, 98). They involve students in procedures, display student work, allow for input into decisions, and give ownership (Lane, 335). They are also knowledgeable of the content they teach, the social sciences, their own culture, and pedagogy (Banks, 244). Teachers should help students understand that human relations should become something enjoyed by those who practice it, not something done for praise or external rewards (Lane, 111). All of this is done with a smiling face and a positive attitude. These teachers have zest for what they do and are excited to come to work each day (343).

Using Children’s Literature in Human Relations

These same expert teachers and professionals in education see the value of using children’s literature in the classroom. It is way another way to show examples of expected and desired behavior to students in a way in which they can relate. Teaching literature is a way of making people better human beings and better citizens (Showalter, 22).

Children's literature teaches concepts that are not only important in education, but in life (Showalter, 24). Carefully chosen children's literature allows students to see themselves in the characters in the books and relate to them. They see positive human relations modeled in literature, which allows them to see it as something that is attainable outside the classroom and in their own lives (Martin & Johri, 104).

Literature entertains and informs. It enables young people to explore and understand their world. It enriches their lives and widens their horizons. They learn about people and places on the other side of the world as well as ones down the street. They can travel back and forth in time to visit familiar places and people, to meet new friends, and to see new worlds. They can explore their own feelings, shape their own values, and imagine lives beyond the one they live (Cullinan & Galda, 7).

Children's literature tells stories, elaborates concepts, and presents important information, all things learners need (Cullinan & Galda, 69). Literature prompts students to explore their feelings, gain insight into human experiences beyond their own, begin to understand themselves better, and understand why others react as they do (8). Quality children's literature, chosen for the human relations classroom, reflects people worldwide who are diverse in their ethnicity, religion, nationality, and socioeconomic status, but are united by the commonalities of humankind (8). Children are able to see people who are in some ways similar to them, experiencing or feeling things they have never felt, similarly, they may see someone very different from themselves experiencing or feeling something with which they are very familiar. In both situations children are relating to the text and learning from it. The books enrich and extend the children's world and provide experiences that allow them to confirm their own worth and learn about others (116).

Students need to be taught of the opportunities and experiences available beyond their world if they are to challenge themselves and dream of an existence beyond what they know. “Children can express individuality only in relation to the traditions of their society, which they have to learn” (Hirsch, 126). Similarly, they can only express altruism with others in terms of their knowledge of others. If they do not know about other possibilities, how will they ever achieve them? If they are not taught ideas beyond their own cultural customs, how will they ever know about individuals of a different culture or how to interact with them?

Picture books are staples in every classroom, no matter the level. They can support every area of the curriculum (Cullinan & Galda, 114). Literature can provide information in all the content areas, including human relations (8). Picture books engage children with the pictures and the stories used to impart a message (253). In nursery schools and primary grades, children’s literature develops concepts through vicarious experiences. In the older grades, picture books go beyond this to display literary techniques and the writer’s craft. Books for this age may explore more difficult concepts in a precise manner (69). When such touchy subjects are addressed, a teacher should use candor and clear labeling to prepare students. It is also important to inform students in advance that they may be upset or have a strong emotional reaction to what is being read (Showalter, 126). After all, humans learn best when emotions are involved and when actively engaged (Cullinan & Galda, 253).

An Example of Human Relations in Literature

Rural, small town Iowa is not the first place most people think of as having a great need for human relations. It is generally thought to be a place of little diversity, but

Stephen G. Bloom shatters this myth in his book describing the events he witnessed in a rural, small town in Iowa. The citizens of Postville had culture shock without leaving their hometown. The book provides a perfect example of the need for human relations in classrooms around the world and in small town Iowa. The issues presented in *Postville* are the epitome of the very struggle Mr. Bloom was facing in his own life; the clash between the ultra-orthodox Jewish lifestyle and the local “Iowa” way of life. Bloom and his family moved from California to Iowa City, Iowa (Bloom, 14). They struggled to fit in to a mostly Christian, farming community (17). Bloom’s family is not a unique example of a family with a struggle, though. All people have some type of similar struggle inside them. Perhaps not all have the same type of cultural struggle, but there are always conflicting ideas, attitudes, and situations where decisions must be made, between conflicting ideas, in the world and inside people. Looking for an answer to the question of co-existence in Postville, Bloom’s curiosity drove him to answer a deeper question: could these two cultures co-exist inside him? This is the type of question everyone desiring positive human relations in their life should ask themselves (Martin & Johri, 86).

Postville: A clash of cultures in heartland America is an eye-opening book for anyone wishing to experience diversity, but has not had the opportunity in their life. It is the perfect example of how literature can enrich and extend the lives of children and enhance the classroom environment. The Jews resuscitated a previously dilapidating Postville by giving life to the slaughterhouse. *Postville* follows the small town in events and descriptions leading up to the annexation vote. The vote is to decide if the land where the Jewish slaughterhouse was built will be annexed by the city. Many local

people did not like the power this gave the Jewish community and they hoped that the annexation vote would take back some of their power and, perhaps, encourage the Jews to leave the town (Bloom, xii).

Postville provides its readers with a picture of diversity and the struggle to relate to others. It emphasizes the need for human relations in the entire world today, even in a small town in Iowa. In *Postville*, Bloom began to teach these skills to his little boy. Such skills should begin to be taught at home, as Bloom modeled, but must continue in the classroom.

Strategies for Human Relations Education

The most effective training in human relations, according to Cummings is “day-by-day satisfying, meaningful associations and experiences with others of varied background and abilities” (54). Community members can be used as valuable resources in this capacity, but this is not always possible depending on the community. No matter the community, human relations should start with discussions of real life experiences (Sleeter & Grant, 91) where the teacher begins with many questions posed to the students (Cummings, 50). Discussion can develop and sort through emerging moral reasoning, but teachers should be careful not to indoctrinate values to students; they must control their own emotions (Martin & Johri, 97). Students should be given the opportunity to share their story, but never forced. As students share, others begin to grow in their understanding of variations in life (51). Students learn that all people should be respected and accepted, but not necessarily their beliefs or behaviors (98). Picture books can be used to supplement the real life experiences of the students.

Misconceptions should be addressed as soon as instruction begins because they must be discovered and corrected before further learning can take place (Martin & Johri, 64). Preconceived notions are difficult to correct, but they can be corrected with education (60). By the time students are school age they have begun to develop attitudes of prejudice (56). Prejudices do not just happen; they are learned. Young children do not express prejudice, though, so this is the time in which they must learn sound, wholesome attitudes and the reasons for having them (55). Teachers can help students to look at the analytical side of behavior, too (75). It must be asked why certain behaviors and attitudes occur in one's self, and in others, if that behavior or attitude is to be changed (71).

Instruction in human relations should be comprehensive and integrated and diverse strategies should be used (Sleeter & Grant, 91). Children's literature lends itself perfectly to this type of instruction because literature can be taught in a large variety of ways and with a variety of genres. With the increased focus on meeting standards and time requirements for each content area, there is not time to teach a separate lesson on human relations everyday.

Literature can be used to integrate human relations into the major content areas: reading, math, social studies, and science (Cullinan & Galda, 8). Teachers can use literature that portrays a human relations concept in their literacy instruction; they can include books about different groups of people and places around the world in social studies. In math, teachers can incorporate books about the math concept being taught that shows diversity. In science, students learn how the world around them works and characteristics of different people in that world, from books. Education must develop

individuality and adaptiveness to change along with common understandings (Cummings, 113).

Children's literature can explain concepts more clearly than textbooks or encyclopedias. They provide pictures, make comparisons easy to see and understand, and encourage critical thinking (Cullinan & Galda, 114). Books are a powerful force teachers can take advantage of by using children's literature across the curriculum.

Children's literature also builds the language ability of children by expanding their vocabulary and modeling proper use of the English language. The more a child reads, or is read to, the better they get; the better they get, the more they can learn (Cullinan & Galda, 8).

Kiefer, Hickman, and Cionciolo found that children learn best from children's literature when it is read aloud often, teachers talk to their students about the content in the books, and children see the comparisons to real life and to other books. Most importantly, though, is that children are provided time and opportunity to reflect on their own response to the text: how they feel and what they are thinking (Cullinan & Galda, 115). Children will vary in how they respond, but all will have a response of some kind. For example, some children will choose to respond through art, some through drama, others through physical activity or journals, and some will respond in their own writing. Each child will not always respond through the same medium, so teachers need to provide opportunities to respond in different ways at different times (116). Kiefer found the level of response was greatly increased when a supportive, enriched environment was present where children were encouraged to respond enthusiastically to books (115).

One specific strategy for using children's literature, while studying the content areas, is role playing an event presented in a story. This is an appropriate strategy because it may be the closest situations some students have to real life experiences with diversity. Role playing allows students to better understand the feeling of the persons involved, try out solutions, and understand the situation without having to feel persecuted for involving their own personal issues (Lane, 274).

Further strategies for use with children's literature could include, but are not limited to: debate of controversial issues (Martin & Johri, 103); examination of the life patterns of people with good morals and ethics through biographies, interviewing authority figures, questioning ideas and actions of oneself and others, practice in choosing freely from alternatives (96); researching famous quotes and their meanings (103); and, learning democratic principles (96).

Mock meetings can be held to examine human relations in context. It makes sense to use meeting situations pertinent to content areas being covered. For example, Galileo's trial can be used in math or science, or Ben Franklin for social studies (Martin & Johri, 100). Also, students can identify "literary lies" in literacy instruction to determine if lies are ever justified. Examples are found in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, and many more. Moral dilemmas can also be found in content areas outside literature. For example, Watergate: was any type of lying justified? Students have to analyze the situation, apply their beliefs, and take a stand on the issue (101).\

Principles for Teaching Human Relations

There are certain principles to keep in mind when teaching human relations using any method. First, accurate information should always be presented (Sleeter & Grant, 92). It is the job of the teacher to insure that the information presented during instruction, in picture books or otherwise, is accurate. This can be done by reading professional reviews of the material, asking the opinion of other professionals, or researching the content that is to be taught (McEwan, 18). Second, use group process, vicarious experiences, and role playing. Real life experiences are not always available to students or teachers, so similar experiences must be created for students to discuss and analyze. Third, students should be involved in community action projects. One approach is to teach *about* human relations, but until students can make choices and advocate for change, they have not fully learned what human relations is about (Sleeter & Grant, 92). Human relations should be integrated into many content areas so students see the relationship between human relations, everything else they are being taught, and their real lives. Students who have had the opportunity to properly examine their beliefs are more willing to publicly affirm them and take actions in support (Martin & Johri, 96).

Conclusion

While human relations have been taught in a variety of ways throughout history, most experts agree that they need to be taught in such a way that they are integrated across the curriculum, comprehensive to all cultures, and taught with diverse strategies (Sleeter & Grant, 91). Students must see human relations modeled in their lives and have practice relating to others. Children also need to have meaningful experiences with diverse populations; supplementation is necessary, through children's literature or other

media in a classroom, because authentic experiences are not always available (Cummings, 54).

Children's literature allows students to explore and expand their world through the vicarious experiences they are exposed to as they read (Cullinan & Galda, 8).

Literature engages and entertains students as they learn. Picture books are an excellent way to integrate human relations into all the content areas, so students can see that human relations is the foundation of living successfully in a democratic society (Lane, 106).

Human relations is more than a method for teaching; or a classroom management strategy; it is a large part of a teaching philosophy. Human relations is a variety of skills that one assumes in all aspects of their life. A teacher must model this philosophy through actions and inscribed attitudes in the classroom and expectations for students to act in the same way (Martin & Johri, 97). High expectations for achievement and behavior are the foundation for teaching human relations in the classroom (98). These expectations must come from every important figure in the student's life: from their parents, teachers, and community members (95).

A new attitude of altruism must be adopted; new attitudes toward the importance of human relations must be practiced. Human relations need to be the foundation of an integrated curriculum, which serves to teach and inform students in the basic four content areas. All of this must occur, starting at an early age, if the trends in violence around the world, across all cultural groups and all ages, are to be decreased and society, as we know it, is to survive. Learning to live and living to learn can occur in an exploration and implementation of human relations in the classroom.

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- Catalano, A. (2005). *Community resources: The land and the people in communities*. New York: Powerkids Press.
Describes the resources present in a community, the different types of communities, and how resources and people are used to benefit the whole community.
- Cavendish, M. (1991). *The North American Indians*. New York: Marshall Cavendish.
A detailed nonfiction book of the lives, customs, beliefs, and clans of the Indians of North America
- Climo, S. (1995). *The little red ant and the great big crumb*. Illus. Francisco X. Mora. New York: Clarion.
The little red ant finds a crumb, but is too small to carry it. She looks for the strongest thing to help her, but finally realizes she is strong enough to do it all by herself!
- Cooney, B. (1996). *Eleanor*. New York: Viking.
The story of Eleanor Roosevelt from birth to being the first lady of the United States. This story follows her trials and tribulations as well as her poise and success.
- Currier, K. S. (2005). *Kai's journey to Gold Mountain*. Illus. Gabhor Utomo. Tiburon, CA: Angel Island Association.

Explores a boy's journey from China to America, where his first stop is Angel Island. (California's equivalent to Ellis Island)

Curtis, J. L. (2004). *It's hard to be five: Learning how to work my control panel*. Illus. Laura Cornell. New York: Joanna Cotler Books.

Being five is full of difficulties as described by many five year olds in this story. Expressive text and illustrations enhance the story.

Curtis, J. L. (2002). *I'm gunna like me: Letting off a little self-esteem*. Illus. Laura Cornell. New York: Joanna Cotler Books.

Liking yourself all the time can be difficult, but in this story a young girl learns to like herself despite the challenges of her days.

Curtis, J. L. (1996). *Tell me again about the night I was born*. Illus. Laura Cornell. New York: Joanna Cotler Books.

A new twist on the night a young child was born as described by her adoptive mother.

Daley, P. (2002). *Nigeria*. Austin, TX: Steadwell.

A nonfiction book about the many aspects of Nigeria including geography, tourist sights, school, sports, and culture.

Dingle, D.T. (1998). *First in the field: Baseball hero Jackie Robinson*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children.

The biography of Jackie Robinson, the first African American baseball player, chronicles his early and later years, all with support from his family.

Ditchfield, C. (2005). *The Comanche*. New York: Scholastic.

The Comanche live in the Southern Plains. This book details their life, beliefs, and life today with excellent pictures, photographs, and formatting.

Ford, C.T. (2004). *African-American soldiers in the Civil War*. Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow.

A nonfiction story about the people and events in the civil war involving African-American soldiers.

Ford, C. T. (2004). *Daring women of the Civil War*. Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow.

Details the many roles of women in the Civil War, including many famous names.

Gray-Kanatiiosh, B. A. (2002). *Maidu*. Edina, MN: ABDO.

Details the life, myths, customs, and culture of the Maidu Native Americans.

Gresko, M.S. (1999). *Letters home from Israel*. Woodbridge, CT: Blackbirch.

A nonfiction book written about the places, people, customs, and culture of Israel from the perspective of a tourist's letters home.

Grobel Intrater, R. (1995). *Two eyes a nose and a mouth*. New York: Scholastic.

The simple text and real photographs show how everyone has some of the same features, but we are all different.

Guy, G. F. (1996). *Fiesta!* Illus. Rene King Moreno. New York: Greenwillow.

Fiesta! describes the events, people, and objects at a child's party, in both English and Spanish.

Harness, C. (2005). *Our Colonial year*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Uses the months of the year to detail what people during Colonial times did.

Harrah, M. (2004). *Blind Boone: Piano prodigy*. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books.

John Boone was born to a former slave, and blinded at only six months. Despite this disability, he was a piano prodigy; able to imitate any sound he heard.

Harrington, J. N. (2004). *Going North*. Illus. Jerome Lagarrigue. New York: Melanie Kroupa.

A family leaves the segregated South to find a better home in the North. They encounter many struggles along the way.

Hoffman, M. (2002). *The color of home*. Illus Karin Littlewood. New York: Phyllis Fogelman.

A young boy immigrated from Somalia but he knows very little English. He struggles to communicate until his teacher brings out the art supplies.

Holl, K. D. (1986). *Perfect or not, here I come*. New York: Atheneum.

A young girl is so intent on making the play she wrote turn out perfect that she almost losing site of more important things. The girl soon learns that perfection is not life's goal.

Hopkinson, D. & Andersen, B. (2001). *Bluebird summer*. Greenwillow.

Every summer a young boy and girl went to their grandparents house, but this story depicts their struggle to go on without grandma, and as grandpa sells the farm.

Khan, K. A. (2003). *What you will see inside a Mosque*. Illus. Aaron Pepis. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths.

Complete with photographs and detailed explanations, this book describes the Muslim religion, traditions, beliefs, and the actual Mosque.

Korman, G. (2005). *On the run: Chasing the Falconers*.

The Falconer children escape from juvenile detention to try to prove the innocence of their parents and save them from facing life in prison.

Kurtz, J. (2005). *In the small, small night*. Illus. Rachel Isadora. Harper Collins.

An immigrant boy cannot sleep in his new home in the United States until his sister soothes his fears by telling him two folktales from Ghana, where they are from.

Landau, E. (1999). *Norway*. New York: Children's Press.

A nonfiction book about the places, history, and culture of Norway, complete with photographs.

Lasky, K. (2000). *Vision of beauty: The story of Sarah Breedlove Walker*. Illus. Nneka Bennett. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.

Sarah Breedlove Walker was born into poverty, but created hair and beauty products for black women. Through her creations, she became a great success.

Lujan, J. & Monroy, M. (2004). *Rooster Gallo*. Berkeley, CA: Greenwood Books.

The author wrote this poem with the idea that the rooster is the poet of the day. It is told in both English and Spanish with beautiful illustrations.

Lye, Keith. (1982). *Take a trip to India*. New York: Franklin Watts.

Learn about the land, people, places and culture of India in a book that takes the reader on a trip across the country, complete with photographs.

Olivas, D. A. (2005). *Benjamin and the word*. Illus. Don Dyen. Houston, TX: Pinata Books.

In anger, a young boy calls his friend, Benjamin a bad name. Benjamin tries to sort out his feelings in this story told in both English and Spanish.

Powers, M.E. (1986). *Our teacher's in a wheelchair*. Niles, IL: Albert Whitman.

Depicts the activities of a teacher in a wheelchair through his school day. It shows his abilities and the feelings of the students.

MacLeod, E. (2004). *Marie Curie*. Tonawanda, NY: Kids Can Press.

Marie Curie was a brilliant scientist who discovered radium. Her goal was to use radiation to help people, especially to improve their health.

Mayo, M. (2000). *Brother sun, sister moon: The life and stories of St. Francis*. Illus. Peter Malone. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

St. Francis came from a wealthy family, but chose to be poor because he valued his beliefs and helping others more than monetary wealth.

McBratney, S. (2004). *You're all my favorites*. Illus. Anita Jeram. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

A family of bears explain how all of the three children can be the favorite and the best baby bears in the whole world.

McNamee, G. (2002). *Sparks*. New York: Wendy Lamb Books.

Todd moves from a special needs classroom to a regular classroom and struggles to relate to his old friends until a school assignment helps him see things more clearly.

Miller, J. (2005). *Who's who in a neighborhood*. New York: Powerkids Press.

Describes what it is like to live in a neighborhood, the responsibilities and options available to its citizens, and the benefits of living in a neighborhood.

Miller, J. (2005). *Who's who in a school community*. New York: Powerkids Press.

A school community is comprised of the people who work in a school along with those who help in the ways to get to school, health and safety at school, and meals at school.

Milord, S. (1992). *Hands around the world: 365 creative ways to build cultural awareness and global respect*. Charlotte, VT: Williamson.

With a new activity or suggestion for each day of the year, this book builds cultural awareness and global respect. Some activities are good for children independently, some for parents, and some for teachers.

Morpurgo, M. (1996). *Robin of Sherwood*. Illus. Michael Foreman. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace & Company.

A boy dreams of the adventures of Robinhood, who fought tyranny by stealing from the rich and giving to the poor.

Morrison, T. (2004). *Remember: The journey to school integration*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

A nonfiction story about school integration told from the perspective of a child at that time.

Quinn, D. P. (1996). *Religions of the world: I am Buddhist*. New York: Powerkids.

From the perspective of a Buddhist child, this book tells of the Buddhist religion, beliefs, and traditions.

Sita, L. (1997). *Indians of the Southwest: Traditions, history, legends, and life*. Milwaukee, WI: Gareth Stevens.

Through beautiful photographs and formatting, this book shares the traditions, history, legends, and life of the Indians of the Southwest.

St. George, J. (1992). *Dear Dr. Bell...your friend, Helen Keller*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Helen Keller and Alexander Graham Bell encountered each other several times in their lives, including when he recommended she have a teacher. This teacher turned out to be Anne Sullivan.

Staeger, R. (2003). *Native American religions*. Philadelphia, PA: Mason Crest.

A detailed nonfiction book about the religions of Native Americans living in different parts of the United States, South, and Central America.

Stauffacher, S. (2005). *Harry Sue*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Harry Sue wants to go to jail just to be with her mother, but instead she must take care of her paralyzed friend and the neglected children at her grandmother's daycare.

Stewart, W. & Rippin, S. (2005). *Becoming Buddha: The story of Siddhartha*. South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: HEIAN.

Siddhartha was a prince who gave up everything for his journey to enlightenment. Once he found it he spent his life teaching others of the Buddhist ways.

Stoeke, J. M. (2005). *Waiting for May*. New York: Dutton.

A family is adopting a daughter from China and the young boy in the family is anxiously awaiting her arrival. They learn a lot about May and her country as they go there to get her.

Taback, S. (2005). *Kibitzers and fools: Tales my zayda told me*. New York: Penguin Group.

Filled with stories from Poland that a young boy's grandfather (zayda) told him, this book uses bright colors and vivid pictures to share stories of a culture.

Taylor, M.D. (1976). *Roll of thunder, hear my cry*. New York: Dial.

Follows a young black girl's story as she and her family deal with racism during the depression.

Woodson, J. (2000). *Sweet, sweet memory*. Illus. Floyd Cooper. New York: Hyperion.

A young girl deals with the loss of her grandfather while remembering the lessons he taught her.

Viorst, J. (1972). *Alexander and the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day*. Illus. Ray Cruz. New York: Atheneum.

Some days everything goes wrong no matter what is done to prevent it. Alexander is having one of those days, but he comes to realize that everyone has days like that. It is not just him and it is not his fault.

Yang, B. (2004). *Hannah is my name*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.

Immigrating to the United States can be difficult as the child in the story must adjust to life here while also waiting for her green card.