*Learning Chinese History and Culture through Children’s Literature*

***“Ruby’s Wish”***

*by Shirin Yim Bridges*

**Date:** January 13, 2017

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**Unit Title:** Learning Chinese History and Culture through Children’s Literature

**Unit Abstract:** In using the story, “Ruby’s Wish”, I intend for the students to be able to read the story and replicate some of the activities portrayed in the story. By doing this the students will gain a better understanding of Chinese culture and history. By having the students interview their grandparents or eldest member of the family it imparts a closer connection to the story. By comparing the families then and now, students can see how the times have changed. Students would learn the many aspects of calligraphy and work on both there Chinese handwriting as well as their English. Then having the students write a poem drawing relations from nature and family. In order to expand the lessons I would like to incorporate physical education. I would utilize Tai Chi with the student and begin their lessons into QiGong and the 20 moves of the routine.

**Content Standards:**

English Language Arts: *1.3 Reading Literature*

Arts and Humanities: *9.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts*

Geography: *7.3 The Human Characteristics of Places and Regions*

1. Make, confirm and revise simple predictions 2. Establish the authors purpose 3. Identify themes within the story. 4. Make connections between characters and events and people in their own lives 5. Use context clues to decode unknown words 6. Use textual organizers 7. Identify and understand different messages portrayed in the visual text 8. Name several ways that stories, music and artistic expression assist in identifying cultures 9. Understand how family connections are made from one generation to the next.10. Identify how various forms of art can be used to express oneself 11. Use reading skills and strategies to understand informational texts 12. Summarize and paraphrase information presented in the text13. Write a biographical composition 14. Write several Chinese characters using calligraphy 15. Compare cross cultural holidays

**Content Area’s:** English/Langage Arts, World Language, Arts and Humanities, History and Social Studies, Health, Safety and Physical Education

**Targeted Grades**: 4-8

**How will this unit be integrated into your curriculum:** As an elementary educator my goal is to introduce students to literature they may not be familiar with and to provide them reading opportunities that will introduce them to new cultures and ways of living. I would utilize the reading of this story as its own mini unit but in relation to a larger cultural diversity unit.

**Big Ideas:** 1. Students will understand that Chinese culture may be different from their own but still maintain many similarities. 2. How greatly different family structures maintain the basic core elements but there has been adjustments in roles. 3. Handwriting is a sign of character 4.Physical movement is an important aspect of wellbeing.

**Essential Questions**: 1. How are traditional Chinese families different from modern day Chinese families. 2. What is the importance of a written language 3. How has the role of women in Chinese culture changed 4. How do relatives and family members affect and influence others within the family. 5. What is the importance of education 6.

**Lessons:** 1. Grandparent Interview w/ Oral Presentation

2. Calligraphy: the art of writing ; characters, technologies and tools; brush strokes, handwriting, control of mind, body and muscles ; 8 stroke method

3. Comparison of Families in the past and present ; Size of Family, Name of School, Best Subject, Worst Subject, Favorite Hobby

4. Poetry Day: Write a poem about nature oriented things, family oriented things or what in the world would you like to improve; Read and present poem

5. Tai Chi movements; start the 20 move QiGong; choreography, introduce the 6 main elements: earth, wind, water, fire, wood, metal

**Culminating Lesson/Activity:** 1. Oral Presentation of Grandparent/ Elder Interview 2.Reading of the Nature, family, make the world a better place poem with their calligraphy.

**Assessment:**  1. Writing the “Yung”, Chinese character, using calligraphy 2. Conducting an interview with an elder family member and presenting this to the class as an oral history 3. Completed page comparing generational families 3. Handwritten Poem

**Resources :** Book: *“Ruby’s Wish”* by Shirin Yim Bridges ; calligraphy paper, brush and ink, Family Comparison page; sample pictures of the 20 moves of the QiGong

**Explanation of how the seminar helped you develop the plan:** The seminar assisted in developing my plans by exposing me to many aspects of East Asian culture that was previously unknown to me. It allowed me to experience and sample some of the techniques and skills associated with East Asian crafts. The seminar has been a great source of information and knowledge of Asiatic cultures. The numerous resources that were given: books (classic and modern), movies, people that were named, I would not have been exposed to without this course. My lesson and activity for calligraphy is coming directly from my notes and recommendations made during the seminar.