

◆ Classroom Spice ◆

Volume 1, Issue 1 Dr. Jeanne Mather, Editor

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What is Culture?

The following passage is taken from *The Color of Culture* by Mona Lake Jones and is offered as food for thought. "Everybody has culture, even though some folks think they don't. Culture is ever present. It greets you when you and the sun first wake up in the morning and it rests with you when you get comfortable enough to fall asleep and say the day is over. Culture is how you love and who you choose to love. It's whether you eat cornbread and pumpernickel. It's how you respond to the dilemmas life offers and how you celebrate living. It
(Continued on page 3)

"Culture invites you to participate in living."

Mona Lake Jones

Multicultural Resource Center Opens

We are pleased to announce the opening of the USAO Multicultural Resource Center (MRC). It was developed through the efforts of the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and a National Education Association Grant. As the world appears to be shrinking, our schools and communities reflect more and more diversity. Teaching must make adjustments to these changes in order to ensure that all our students get the best education possible.

The center, in response to the growing state interest in multicultural issues, is designed to assist school districts in becoming more familiar with multicultural literature and instructional materials. In particular, it is intended to give teachers and preservice teachers hands-on opportunities and information regarding availability, appropriateness, and

strategies for incorporating multiculturalism into the classroom.

Initially we are setting up an area in our education department where teachers and/or librarians may review multicultural children's literature, posters, workbooks, puzzles, and other instructional materials. In the future as more materials are purchased, particularly



A Shrinking World has Implications for Teachers

duplicate copies, teachers and librarians will be allowed to check out materials for classroom use or review.

An additional feature includes a newsletter we will be publishing approximately three times during the school year with reviews of selected materials and suggestions for inclusion of multiculturalism into the standard curriculum.

The center has been fortunate to receive substantial support from a number of publishers who have donated materials and/or catalogs. Publishers donating materials include: Albert Whitman, Frank Schaffer, Greenfield Review Press, Mimosa, Pinata, School Zone, Ward Hill, and Weston Walch. Catalogs have been donated by the above publishers, as well as by Black Classic Press, Children's Press, Franklin Watts, National Women's History Project, North American Native Authors, Harper Collins, Holiday House, Just Us Books, Pathfinder, Steck-Vaughn, and Sundance.

The center is directed by Dr. Jeanne Mather, a certified elementary and secondary teacher with a wide range of interests including mathematics, social studies, computers, and language arts. She will be available for consultations and programs (at your school) upon request.

In an attempt to provide services to as many as possible we encourage you to copy and share this letter with others. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, turn to the questionnaire on page 3.

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Tips for ESL or Foreign Language Teaching in the Elementary Classroom

*This product "...
evaluates a
student's
understanding of
beginning sounds,
but also gives
them a chance to
use words that are
meaningful to
them..."*

School Zone has some excellent resources for primary Spanish-speaking students and/or for the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language in the elementary classroom. Whether you have non-English speaking PK-2 students in your regular class or your school has bilingual classes, the School Zone workbooks in Spanish are excellent tools. Several of the concepts/books could be used equally by English or Spanish speaking children. The difference is only in the directions. For example, if using any of the following Los Colores (Colors), Contando del 1 al 10 (Counting 1 -10), or Igual o Diferente (Same or Different) children could be doing the same activity with directions in their native language and exposure to the written word in their native language. A great idea would be to give a copy of

both workbook pages to become familiar with the similarities and differences in the two languages.

There are two other books which are particular favorites of mine, El Alfabeto: Mayusculas and El Alfabeto: Minusculas. These books on the alphabet, upper and lower case respectively, have pictures whose "Spanish" word are the basis for matching the beginning sound. This still evaluates a student's understanding of beginning sounds, but



also gives them a chance to use words that are meaningful to them and includes three Spanish letters not identified in the English alphabet.

Any of the five books published by School Zone could also be a great resource for the regular elementary class (even up through middle school) which includes the teaching of a foreign language, i.e., Spanish. The simple but fun format should make them favorites for elementary students. School Zone also publishes boxed games, flash cards, game cards, and puzzle cards in Japanese. So stop by and see some of these products or call School Zone for a catalog at 1-800-253-0564. Please mention you heard about their products through our newsletter.

Movie Update Controversy?

**What New
Movie is Based
on a Book So
Controversial
It Made the
Cover of
Newsweek?**

A movie that is due to be released soon is based on a story by Forrest Carter. If you or your classes have enjoyed stories such as Summer of the Monkeys, Huckleberry Finn, or To Kill a Mockingbird, then you *must* read The Education of Little Tree. It is a story which

can be meaningful to students of many grade levels. It is about a Cherokee boy growing up in the 1930's who must live in the Easter Hill Country with his grandparents after the death of his parents. It shares many emotions including happiness, sadness, love, and hate. At the same time it reveals a great deal about the

Native American culture.

After reading it do a little research and find out "the rest of the story" as Paul Harvey would say. There is a controversy which surrounds this autobiography by Forrest Carter. If you can't find out the rest of the story on your own, try your librarian, or the internet. If all else fails call me or drop me a note—you will be surprised!

Survey What Can We Do to Help You?

In an attempt to provide services you will find helpful, please take a moment to respond to the following questions. You can send this original or a photocopy to the USAO Multicultural Resource Center, c/o Dr. Jeanne Mather, Box 82328, Chickasha, OK 73018 or respond by phone at (405) 224-3140 Ext. 291, or e-mail me at: facmatherj@mercur.usao.edu

- 1 What hours/days would you be most likely to utilize the center?

- 2 Do you know of any other teacher/school who would be interested in receiving our newsletter at no charge? If so, please provide name(s) and address(es).

- 3 What type of information or materials or services would you like for the center to provide? (Be as specific as possible in terms of grade level(s), ethnicity, language, content area, audience, etc.)

- 4 Have you encountered any multicultural materials you would recommend to other teachers or you would recommend for inclusion in our Center? Please be specific giving as much information as possible, e.g., titles, publishers, authors, isbn, etc.

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shows itself without you knowing and it tells who you are without you speaking....

Culture is often vibrant and loud or sometimes quiet and subtle, but you know it when you see it because it has color!"

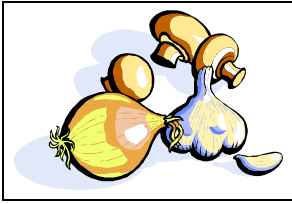
Teaching about Women in History

Distinguished Women in History written by Valerie Vos and published by Frank Schaffer provides information and activities dealing with twenty-six women. Virtually all of the women are Americans, with the exception of Mother Teresa, Margaret Thatcher, and Queen Victoria. The women were selected based on their contributions in various fields including politics, music, dance, sports, science, exploration, and humanitarianism.

The book has a self-contained unit for each of the women including a one page

biography, two reproducible pages of related student activities, and a page devoted to potential research questions and resources. The book is geared for middle and upper grade students, but could be adapted higher or lower as needed.

Review it in the MRC or check your Frank Schaffer catalog (1-800-609-1734). Anytime you contact a publisher about products in our newsletter please let them know where you heard about it!



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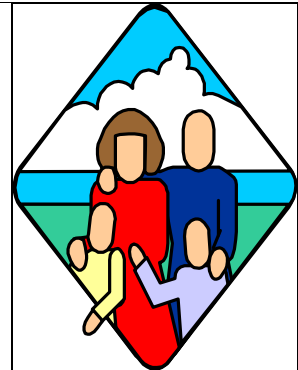
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Introduction to the MRC, Review of Materials available in the MRC

Parental Involvement and ESL



Could you use access to over two hundred school related phrases in communicating with Spanish Speaking Parents?

An excellent resource for schools is Teachers' Messages for Report Cards: English-Spanish Edition published by Fearon Teacher Aids. It is a small, information filled book designed to help **non-Spanish speaking teachers** communicate with Spanish-speaking parents/guardians about common school problems. It is organized around chapters dealing with such concerns as weak work; behavior, personality, and playground problems; social, attitude, and self-esteem changes; attendance and tardiness

problems; slow, average, gifted, and new students; and end-of-the-year messages. There are two hundred thirty-six messages, one hundred fifty-eight phrases, and fourteen additional adjectives all listed in both English and Spanish. If you are interested in reviewing the book or in picking up a Fearon Catalog stop by the MRC. If you are interested in ordering the book and need additional information use its ISBN # 0-86653-997-2.

Food for Thought:

"Sometimes it's hard to pretend you're not aware that people wish you weren't there."