

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 453 506

CS 014 302

AUTHOR Kaminiski, Rebecca
TITLE Using Multicultural Cinderella Books To Engage Students in Comprehension Strategies. Classroom Connections.
INSTITUTION Reading Recovery Council of North America, Columbus, OH.
PUB DATE 2000-00-00
NOTE 6p.
AVAILABLE FROM Reading Recovery Council of North America, Inc., 1929 Kenny Road, Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43210-1069. Tel: 614-292-7111; Web site: <http://www.readingrecovery.org>.
PUB TYPE Journal Articles (080)
JOURNAL CIT Council Connections; p14-17 Fall 2000
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Childrens Literature; Class Activities; *Classroom Techniques; *Fairy Tales; Instructional Effectiveness; Learning Activities; *Learning Strategies; *Literacy; Multicultural Education; Primary Education; Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS *Cinderella; Folktales; Multicultural Literature; *Response to Literature

ABSTRACT

Teachers can help their young students build a strong foundation for multicultural understanding by introducing them to stories from many cultures and teaching them to use the cognitive strategies that enable them to comprehend and experience cultures different from their own. Multicultural literature can become a powerful tool that illustrates for children the similarities that exist between cultures and begins to ease cultural prejudice and intolerance. In particular, folktales can help children connect to their past and to other cultures. In this article, folktales that deal with the main character Cinderella are used as examples for implementing literacy activities in the classroom. The article discusses how to use a folktale variant with children and presents general literature response activities and literature response activities dealing with character, setting, problem, plot and events, ending, and the motif of magic. Contains a bibliography of 18 "Cinderella" stories representing different cultures, and recommended professional resources and Web pages. (NKA)

Using Multicultural Cinderella Books To Engage
Students in Comprehension Strategies.
Classroom Connections.

by Rebecca Kaminiski

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS
BEEN GRANTED BY

J. F. Bussell

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Classroom Connections

Using Multicultural Cinderella Books To Engage Students In Comprehension Strategies

Rebecca Kaminiski, Assistant Professor, Clemson University

This column is designed to serve Reading Recovery partners: the classroom teachers who work together with Reading Recovery teachers to teach children to read and write.

A note from Joe Yukish, Editor, Classroom Connections:

In their popular book, *Mosaic of Thought*, Keen and Zimmerman (1997) list the following cognitive strategies that good readers employ while reading.

1. Activate relevant, prior knowledge (schema) before, during, and after reading text.
2. Determine the most important ideas and themes in a text.
3. Ask questions of themselves, the authors, and the texts they read.
4. Create images from text during and after reading. These images may include visual, auditory, and other sensory connections to text.
5. Draw inferences from text using prior knowledge (schema) and textual information to make conclusions, critical judgments, and form unique interpretations from text.
6. Retell or synthesize what they have read.
7. Utilize a variety of fix up strategies to repair comprehension when it breaks down.

Too often classroom reading instruction overemphasizes the 7th strategy by teaching "fix-up strategies" focusing primarily on "deciphering words." Good readers are able to deal with the graphophonic features in difficult words by orchestrating word analysis with balanced attention to other sources of information in text. In this Classroom Connections column, Rebecca Kaminiski describes how to highlight all seven cognitive strategies listed above while allowing children to study various cultural differences through folktale variants.

By introducing children to stories from many cultures, teachers can help them build a strong foundation for multicultural understanding by teaching them to use the cognitive strategies that enable them to comprehend and experience cultures different from their own. Lukens (1995) states that we are now fortunate as a result of scholarly collecting, folktales that once flourished only in communities where people did not read or write have become the property of all people. She found that "hundreds of versions of the same story occur in countless cultures and show almost infinite variations, but are similar in their focus on human yearning for social acceptance and material comfort" (p. 22).

Therefore, multicultural literature can become a powerful tool that illustrates for children the similarities that exist between cultures and begins to ease cultural prejudice and intolerance (Pate, 1988). In particular, folk tales can help children connect to their past and to other cultures.

Using Folktales to Teach How Comprehension Works in Narrative Text

In order to interpret folktales, the student must participate in effective comprehension of these stories. Keene and Zimmerman (1997) state that readers must make three types of connections with text to comprehend effectively:

- (1) Text-to-text connections involve comparing and contrasting elements within the story itself as well as comparing and contrasting the current story with another story experienced previously.
- (2) Text-to-self connections involve relating aspects of the story to feelings the students hold within their own knowledge base (schemata), feelings and emotions.
- (3) Text-to-world connections require students to relate aspects of the story to life and surroundings in their own culture.

Smagorinsky (1992) cites Escholz's observation that readers, "see the printed word; they develop an eye — and ear — for language, the shape and order of sentences, and the texture of paragraphs." Smagorinsky goes on to support the practice of exposing writers to models of text forms through reading and analysis, before expecting them to write in those forms.

If reading model passages enables writers to focus in on particular aspects of the reading material as Escholz suggests, students should be allowed to practice comprehension strategies while reading less complex; more manageable text that enables them to observe their use of a cognitive strategy, before they are expected to use similar strategies to comprehend more difficult stories. In form, the genre of folktales is less complex than other forms of narrative literature and can provide an opportunity for this "strategic observation."

Lukens (1995) lists the following characteristics of folktales that enable them to be used to highlight important narrative literature characteristics such as plot, characterization, setting, mood, style, and tone in a less complex story format.

continued on next page

Using Multicultural Cinderella Books Continued ...

In form, the folktale relies on flat characters, bad ones and good ones, who are easily recognized. Since folktales were heard by the teller and then retold in the teller's own words, there was hardly time for subtle character development. A brief phrase, which may be repeated often, serves to draw characters, since the teller cannot risk losing the audience by departing from the fast paced narration of action to describe thoughts and feelings.

Person vs. person conflict between characters or personified animals often characterizes folktales.

Plots are progressive and easy to follow. A climax comes very near the end of the story. The closing is as brief as they lived happily ever after. The "fast and lively" action is the heart of the folktale.

Point of view is rarely first person since tales are told about flat characters in fantastic situations.

Themes are explicit, stated in a straightforward manner, but they are not didactic or preachy.

Justice is absolute and is never sentimentalized. Good is rewarded, evil punished and the wicked often meet violent ends.

Theme and tone of the folktale varies, but all comment on human needs and wishes (pp. 23-24).

In this article, folktales that deal with the main character Cinderella are used as examples for implementing literacy activities in the classroom. (A list of 18 "Cinderella" stories representing numerous cultures can be found at the end of this article.) These "Cinderella" stories provide an excellent source of content for guiding students to draw comparisons among common literary elements (e.g. characters, setting, problems, plot, story sequence and magical features). In addition, they are simple enough to allow students to observe their own use of important cognitive strategies in comprehending the stories.

In addition to the characteristics listed by Lukens, these particular books have a similar length (32 page average), a complex yet familiar story line, appeal to a variety of age levels (8-13 years), and are structurally representative of the folktale genre.

How to Use a Folktale Variant with Children

Teachers can employ the following sequence of using a variant of the Cinderella story as a model for presenting any folktale variant to children.

1. Begin with a teacher-led book introduction activity (Clay, 1991). During this time, the teacher can probe the student's background knowledge about "Cinderella" tales and add new information about the particular multicultural "Cinderella" book that would be read during the day's lesson.
2. Read the selected multicultural "Cinderella" book aloud to the students. While reading the book, the teacher can model effective reading skills and expose the children to the comparative content of the literature.
3. Begin the after-reading discussion by leading a grand conversation (Eeds & Wells, 1989) of the students' responses to the book. Engage students in a discussion that focuses on the reading experience and the reader's aesthetic reaction to

the book. Cecil (1995) feels that these conversations should be designed by teachers to "model provocative, open-ended questions and help children learn to ask their own critical questions about content" in selections they read.

4. Develop a Book Comparison Chart (Yopp & Yopp, 1992) with the entire group (see figure 1). This graphic organizer serves as a visual comparison of the literary elements in different multicultural "Cinderella" books. The students brainstorm and classify literary elements of the book such as characters, setting, problem, plot and events, ending, and magical features.
5. Once the Book Comparison Chart (Figure 1) is completed, the students respond with various literature response activities for comparing the different literary elements (characters, setting, problem, plot and events, ending, and magical features) using the examples that follow.

Literature Response Activities

Teachers can use the following activities with the multicultural "Cinderella" books listed in the Recommended Children's Books section to help their students develop an understanding of literature types and their characteristics. Only a few examples are listed in each

continued on next page

Figure 1. Book Comparison Chart (BCC) Example

BOOK	CINDERELLA	ROUGH FACED GIRL	RAINBOW COLORED HORSE	TALKING EGGS	MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS
CHARACTERS					
SETTING					
PROBLEM					
EVENTS					
MAGICAL					
FEATURES					

Using Multicultural Cinderella Books Continued ...

area. These are designed to show how an element of folktale literature (i.e. characterization) can be highlighted in a literature response activity. In addition, each activity is correlated with types of text connection (i.e. text-to-text, text-to-self, or text-to-world) suggested by Keene and Zimmerman (1977).

Hopefully, the reader will use this format to develop other activities for the Cinderella stories listed. After trying some of these literature response activities with children, it is hoped that classroom teachers and children will work together to develop similar activities with other sets of folktale variants.

Literature Response Activities Dealing with Character

Folktale characters are generally stock characters that are either "all bad" or "all good." In the multicultural "Cinderella" stories, it is easy to identify the "Cinderella" character as well as the evil "stepsister" characters.

1. Compare Pio, a male "Cinderella," from *The Rainbow Colored Horse* (Belpre, 1978) to any female "Cinderella" character from another variant. (TEXT-TO-TEXT connection.)
2. Write a biographical poem about a favorite character. The biographical poem would include adjectives and adverbs that describe the character, their family, and their surroundings. (TEXT-TO-STORY connection.)
3. Play "What would your character do?" Write scenarios that pose moral predicaments for the characters to consider. Students attempt to react to the scenarios as the character would. (TEXT-TO-TEXT and TEXT-TO-WORLD connection.)

Literature Response Activities Dealing with Setting

The setting of the story includes the time and place where the story takes place. The setting in folk tales is often vague and general, such as "long ago" and "far away." However, teachers can use the setting of multicultural "Cinderella" books to exemplify the location of the culture and specific

characteristics of the living arrangements and behaviors of a different group of people.

1. Use the setting in *The Rough-Faced Girl* (Martin, 1992) as a comparison for the setting in *The Egyptian Cinderella* (Climo, 1989), because both books take place near a natural water source and yet have very different geographic locations. Likewise, students could compare the settings from *The Talking Eggs* (American Creole), *The Rough Faced Girl* (Algonquin Indian). (TEXT-to-TEXT and TEXT-to-WORLD connections.)
2. Conduct research to find out if the illustrations from a multicultural "Cinderella" tale are an authentic match with the actual geographic region and time represented. (TEXT-to-WORLD connections.)
3. Write a transformation of the tale changing the setting to something completely different. How would a change in setting change the outcome of the tale? (You could use *Cinder-Elly*, Minters, 1994 as a model.) (TEXT-to-STORY connection.)

Literature Response Activities Dealing with Problem

Folk tales generally have an easily discernible lesson or moral. Generally in the multicultural "Cinderella" books, the problem is related to the harsh treatment of the main character by a relative. Teachers need to be sensitive to their students' backgrounds before beginning a study of this literary element.

1. Use *Yeh-Shen* (Louis, 1982) and *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* (Stephoe, 1987) for comparing how each "Cinderella" character deals with the problem of mistreatment by a family member. Have students compare their own feelings or response they might have to the mistreatment with that of the character of the story. (TEXT-to-STORY and TEXT-to-SELF connections.)
2. Write a 'Dear Fairy Godmother' letter asking for help to solve your

favorite multicultural "Cinderella" character's problem. (TEXT-to-SELF connection.)

3. Role-play a realistic resolution to the character's problem based on contemporary resources and attitudes. (TEXT-to-WORLD connection.)

Literature Response Activities Dealing with Plot and Events

The plot of the story consists of the events of the story and the sequence in which they are told. The plot in a folk tale is usually fast moving and has a sudden resolution.

1. A good choice for a lesson on plot is *Baba Yaga & Vasilissa the Brave* (Mayer, 1994), because it contains events that are very well developed. Students could draw comparisons between this book and the plot of another multicultural "Cinderella" book. Likewise students could compare events from *The Egyptian Cinderella* (Egypt) and *Yeh-Shen* (China). (TEXT-to-TEXT connection.)
2. Make a timeline of the main events of one of the multicultural books. Post the timelines around the room and draw comparisons between the different books. (TEXT-to-STORY and TEXT-TO-TEXT connection.)
3. Write a newspaper report of the events of the book. Remember to include the "5 Ws" in your article, who, what, when, where, and why. (TEXT-to-STORY connection.)

Literature Response Activities Dealing with Ending

Generally, the ending in a folktale is "and they lived happily ever after." Exactly what those words mean may vary from culture to culture.

1. Responding to the ending in *The Talking Eggs* (San Souci, 1989) is a good choice for the comparison of ending with endings the child has experienced with other stories of this type. Blanche (the Cinderella character) never meets a 'prince'

continued on next page

Using Multicultural Cinderella Books Continued ...

character and she goes off to the city to find happiness on her own. Therefore, she lives happily ever after, but her happiness does not fit the stereotyped ending of other stories. (TEXT-to-TEXT and TEXT-to-SELF connections.)

- Write a sequel to one of the multicultural "Cinderella" books. Require students to support the sequel with the ending of the original tale. (TEXT-to-STORY and TEXT-to-SELF connection.)
- Perform a TV skit in which you conduct a follow up interview with one of the characters from the multicultural "Cinderella" tale. Be sure to ask questions that relate to the original tale and can be answered logically by the character. (TEXT-to-STORY connection.)

Literature Response Activities Dealing with the Motif of Magic

Folktales often contain elements of enchantment and magic. All of the multicultural "Cinderella" stories listed contain an interesting variety of such magical elements relating to characters, plot, or setting. Teachers could use the comparison of the magical features to illustrate the important characteristic of the folk literature genre: unrealistic events.

- Use *Princess Furball* (Huck, 1989) as a study of magical features. Students identify the small items that are enchanted and how the Cinderella character must use them properly to achieve their magical qualities. (TEXT-to-STORY connection.)
- Perform an infomercial to sell a magical item. Develop a prototype of your item. Prepare your script and videotape the infomercial. (TEXT-to-STORY and TEXT-to-WORLD connection.)
- Collect data from a variety of multicultural "Cinderella" books and make a bar graph of the number of magical features found in each of the multicultural "Cinderella" books. (TEXT-to-STORY connection.)

Conclusion

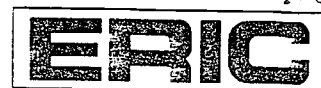
Children's multicultural literature can become a powerful tool to help children recognize the commonalities within cultures. In addition, such books are rich in literary examples from which students can develop cognitive strategies for comprehending more complex text and explore the all genres of literature.

References

- Cecil, N. (1995). *The art of inquiry: Questioning Strategies for K-6 Classrooms*. Winnipeg, Canada: Peguis Publishers.
- Clay, M. (1991). Introducing a new storybook to young readers. *The Reading Teacher*, 45(4), 264-273.
- Eeds, M., & Wells, D. (1989). Grand conversations: An exploration of meaning construction in literature study groups. *Research in the teaching of English*, 23, 4-29.
- Keene, E. O. and S. Zimmerman. (1997). *Mosaic of Thought: Teaching Comprehension in a Reader's Workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Lukens, Rebecca L. (1995). *A critical handbook of children's literature* (Fifth edition). New York: Harper Collins College Publishers.
- Smagorinsky, P. How reading model essays affects writers. In: Irwin, J. and M. A. Doyle, Eds. (1992). *Reading/Writing Connections: Learning from Research*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Pate, G. (1988). Research on reducing prejudice. *Social Education*, 52(4), 287-91.
- Yopp, R., & Yopp, H. (1992). *Literature-based reading activities*. MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Recommended Children's Books**
- Multicultural Cinderella Books**
- Belpre, P. (1978). *The rainbow-colored horse*. NY: Viking Penguin, Inc. (Latin America)
- Climo, S. (1989). *The Egyptian Cinderella*. NY: Harper Collins. (Egypt)
- Climo, S. (1993). *The Korean Cinderella*. NY: Harper Collins. (Korea)
- Ehrlich, A. (1985). *Cinderella*. NY: Puffin. (France)
- Greaves, M. (1990). *Tattercoats*. NY: Clarkson K. Potter. (Great Britain)
- Huck, C. (1989). *Princess Furball*. NY: Scholastic. (Germany)
- Haviland, V. (1996). *Favorite fairy tales told in Italy*. NY: Beech Tree. (Italy)
- Haviland, V. (1996). *Favorite fairy tales told in Norway*. NY: Beech Tree. (Norway)
- Hooks, W. (1987). *Moss gown*. NY: Houghton Mifflin. (US)
- Louis, A. (1982). *Yeh-Shen*. NY: Philomel. (China)
- Lum, D. (1994). *The golden slipper: A Vietnamese legend*. NY: Troll. (Vietnam)
- Martin, R. (1992). *The rough-face girl*. NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons. (US)
- Mayer, M. (1994). *Baba Yaga and Vasilissa the brave*. NY: Morrow. (Russia)
- Perrault, C. (1954). *Cinderella*. New York: Dial. (France)
- San Souci, R. (1989). *The talking eggs*. NY: Scholastic, Inc. (US)
- San Souci, R. (1995). *The little seven-colored horse*. CA: Chronical Books. (US)
- Schroeder, A. (1994). *Lily and the wooden bowl*. NY: Bantam Doubleday Dell. (Japan)
- Stephoe, J. (1987). *Mufaro's beautiful daughters: An African tale*. NY: Mulberry. (Africa)
- Recommended Professional Resources**
- Books**
- Kimbell-Lopez, K. (1999). *Connecting with traditional literature*. MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Polette, N. (1997). *Eight Cinderellas*. US: Pieces of Learning.
- McCarthy. (1996). *Teaching genre in your classroom*. NY: Scholastic, Inc.
- Tiedt, P., & Tiedt, I. (1999). *Multicultural teaching*. MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Web pages**
- Circle of Friends
<http://www.cofbooks.com/index.html>
- Multicultural Literature Everyday
<http://people.clemson.edu/~mlarson>
- Shen's Book and Supplies
<http://www.shens.com>
- Happily Ever After
<http://www.hehd.clemson.edu/currinst/Kaminski/indexK.htm>



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

CS 014 302

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: <i>Using Multicultural Cinderella Books To Engage Students In Comprehension Strategies. Council Connections</i>	
Author(s): <i>Rebecca Kaminiski</i>	
Corporate Source: <i>Reading Recovery Council of North America</i>	Publication Date: <i>Fall 2000</i>

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

_____ Sample _____

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1



The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

_____ Sample _____

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A



The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

_____ Sample _____

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B



Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, →

Signature: <i>Jean F. Bussell</i>	Printed Name/Position/Title: <i>Jean F. Bussell / Exec. Director</i>
Organization/Address: <i>Reading Recovery Council of N. America 1929 Kenny Rd., Suite 100 Columbus, OH 43210-1069</i>	Telephone: <i>614-292-1795</i>
	FAX: <i>614-292-4404</i>
	E-Mail Address: <i>bussell.4@nsu.edu</i>
	Date: <i>4/5/01</i>



III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
1100 West Street, 2nd Floor
Laurel, Maryland 20707-3598

Telephone: 301-497-4080

Toll Free: 800-799-3742

FAX: 301-953-0263

e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov

WWW: <http://ericfac.piccard.csc.com>



Classroom Connections

Using Multicultural Cinderella Books To Engage Students In Comprehension Strategies

Rebecca Kaminiski, Assistant Professor, Clemson University

This column is designed to serve Reading Recovery partners: the classroom teachers who work together with Reading Recovery teachers to teach children to read and write.

A note from Joe Yukish, Editor, Classroom Connections:

In their popular book, *Mosaic of Thought*, Keen and Zimmerman (1997) list the following cognitive strategies that good readers employ while reading:

1. Activate relevant, prior knowledge (schema) before, during, and after reading text.
2. Determine the most important ideas and themes in a text.
3. Ask questions of themselves, the authors, and the texts they read.
4. Create images from text during and after reading. These images may include visual, auditory, and other sensory connections to text.
5. Draw inferences from text using prior knowledge (schema) and textual information to make conclusions, critical judgments, and form unique interpretations from text.
6. Retell or synthesize what they have read.
7. Utilize a variety of fix-up strategies to repair comprehension when it breaks down.

Too often classroom reading instruction overemphasizes the 7th strategy by teaching "fix-up strategies" focusing primarily on "deciphering words." Good readers are able to deal with the graphophonic features in difficult words by orchestrating word analysis with balanced attention to other sources of information in text. In this Classroom Connections column, Rebecca Kaminiski describes how to highlight all seven cognitive strategies listed above while allowing children to study various cultural differences through folktale variants.

By introducing children to stories from many cultures, teachers can help them build a strong foundation for multicultural understanding by teaching them to use the cognitive strategies that enable them to comprehend and experience cultures different from their own. Lukens (1995) states that we are now fortunate as a result of scholarly collecting, folktales that once flourished only in communities where people did not read or write have become the property of all people. She found that "hundreds of versions of the same story occur in countless cultures and show almost infinite variations, but are similar in their focus on human yearning for social acceptance and material comfort" (p. 22).

Therefore, multicultural literature can become a powerful tool that illustrates for children the similarities that exist between cultures and begins to ease cultural prejudice and intolerance (Pate, 1988). In particular, folk tales can help children connect to their past and to other cultures.

Using Folktales to Teach How Comprehension Works in Narrative Text

In order to interpret folktales, the student must participate in effective comprehension of these stories. Keene and Zimmerman (1997) state that readers must make three types of connections with text to comprehend effectively:

- (1) Text-to-text connections involve comparing and contrasting elements within the story itself as well as comparing and contrasting the current story with another story experienced previously.

- (2) Text-to-self connections involve relating aspects of the story to feelings the students hold within their own knowledge base (schemata), feelings and emotions.
- (3) Text-to-world connections require students to relate aspects of the story to life and surroundings in their own culture.

Smagorinsky (1992) cites Escholz's observation that readers, "see the printed word; they develop an eye — and ear — for language, the shape and order of sentences, and the texture of paragraphs." Smagorinsky goes on to support the practice of exposing writers to models of text forms through reading and analysis, before expecting them to write in those forms.

If reading model passages enables writers to focus in on particular aspects of the reading material as Escholz suggests, students should be allowed to practice comprehension strategies while reading less complex, more manageable text that enables them to observe their use of a cognitive strategy, before they are expected to use similar strategies to comprehend more difficult stories. In form, the genre of folktales is less complex than other forms of narrative literature and can provide an opportunity for this "strategic observation."

Lukens (1995) lists the following characteristics of folktales that enable them to be used to highlight important narrative literature characteristics such as plot, characterization, setting, mood, style, and tone in a less complex story format.

continued on next page