

## REVIEWS AND REFLECTIONS

sity, culture, and power interact with school curricula and instruction to prevent many nonmainstream students from successfully learning to read and write.

The brief reviews below highlight materials likely to be useful to teachers working with multicultural curricula.

**Multicultural Books to Make and Share.** *Susan Kapuscinski Gaylord. New York: Scholastic, 1994. 136 pp. Paper.* This publication presents 16 book-making projects, four each from Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe. Projects were chosen to reflect the different cultures, employ convenient materials and tools, and explore a variety of book forms. In each section, the author explains the written and oral traditions of that region of the world. Teachers will be pleased to learn that all projects were tested in classrooms and fine-tuned for presentation in this book. Within each section, projects progress from the simplest to the most difficult. Following every project are suggested readings that will enhance the project and/or curriculum.

A bibliography points readers toward references providing more book-making ideas and historical background. A helpful "Directory of Forms" evaluates the major types of books, such as accordion and slat books, and lists their special features and limitations. Teachers will find that the careful, clear explanations and illustrations make this a most practical and useful book.

**Multicultural Myths and Legends: Stories and Activities to Promote Cultural Awareness.** *Tara McCarthy. New York: Scholastic, 1994. 127 pp. Paper.* This book should prove of value when students are studying the themes contained in myths and legends. Four kinds of themes are explored: origins (how things came to be); order (rules that maintain order in a culture); transformations (humans turning into animals, role reversals); and wisdom (gaining knowledge and insight).

The book begins with a brief explanation of myths and legends and the differences between the two. The author discusses reasons for including myths and legends in a curriculum and how they can be connected to different content areas. Each thematic section begins with a synopsis and background information about each myth or legend and suggestions for using this material.

In addition, the book contains an excellent bibliography of additional stories conveniently arranged by regions of the world.

**Multicultural Voices in Contemporary Literature: A Resource for Teachers.** *Frances Ann Day. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994. 244 pp. Paper.* We have long awaited a publication that features authors and illustrators from various cultural groups. This timely book presents information on 39 authors and illustrators who have produced multicultural works for children and young adults. Readers will find well-known authors such as Eloise Greenfield, along with those such as Dia Cha, whose work may be less familiar. This guide presents a photo and brief biography of each individual, along with a list of his or her publications. Synopses of key works are given, accompanied by suggestions for classroom activities.

The appendices include a list of additional authors and illustrators from various cultural backgrounds, a suggested plan for assessing multicultural programs, a list of the birthdays of the authors and illustrators, a calendar of multicultural events, and information on professional resources such as bibliographies and catalogs. This book will be a valuable addition to the professional libraries of teachers, librarians, and other educators who wish to promote multicultural literature.

### Reflections

As our reviews suggest, recent publications offer educators a wealth of information about issues of diversity. These publications range from those that provide conceptual and research background to those that detail specific activities for classroom use. We hope that educators will consider reading books that run the gamut. Taking a broad view of these issues, rather than focusing exclusively on how-to books, will help us develop a more sophisticated understanding of why certain philosophies and instructional approaches appear to be more successful in classrooms with students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Only with this deeper understanding can we remedy the inequity in opportunities to learn and in achievement that continues to plague our schools.