

April 3, 2009

Dear Professor Schilling,

While searching for a multi-cultural children's book for our first lesson plan, I ran across several books that centered upon the topic of the Chinese New Year. I only incorporated one of those books into my lesson plan, but now I have the opportunity of sharing another with you. The book that I have chosen for this response letter is titled *Moy Moy* and it was written and illustrated by Leo Politi. This book is 32 pages long and it contains many vibrant illustrations.

Moy Moy is about a Chinese-American girl, Lily, who lives in Los Angeles. Before she or any of her siblings were born, her parents moved from China to Chanking Street in Los Angeles. Lily, or Moy Moy as her three older brothers call her, is only four years of age, so that means while her siblings go to school she stays home and helps her mother. This time of year is special throughout the Chinese community because the Chinese New Year is approaching. Due to Moy Moy's age, she does not remember much of last year's celebration; therefore, this year is more special in her eyes. In fact, she is allowed to participate in the dragon parade this year, in which she carries a peacock lantern. Once the parade has ended the celebration does not stop. The shopkeepers see to it that every child receives a toy, such as a kite, drum, puppet, and in Moy Moy's case a doll. 

great summary
good for you - good detail

After reading this children's book I feel that I have better understanding of how another culture chooses to celebrate the New Year. However, one thing this book did not explain was that the Chinese New Year does not occur on January 1st. The reason I know this fact is that I did some research on this particular holiday when I designed my first lesson plan for literacy block. If I had no prior knowledge of the Chinese New Year, I would have assumed that they celebrated it on January 1st, like many other nations. Another interesting fact I learned was that it's customary to "feed" the lion, which travels through the dragon parade, with money. This is to ward off evil spirits and bring forth good luck for the New Year. Even though this book does not thoroughly explain the details of how the Chinese New Year is observed, it does provide an excellent base to build upon. Sadly, I do not remember learning about the Chinese New Year when I was in elementary school, so all that I know about this holiday has come from children's books and internet research.

As a teacher, it will be my responsibility to expose my students to diverse cultures. When I was in elementary school I was rarely exposed to different ethnicities and their beliefs, which most likely was attributed to the fact that my school and the surrounding community consisted of mainly Caucasians. However, it is my belief that all students, whether from an all Caucasian community or not, should have the opportunity to develop sensitivity for diverse customs because at some point in their life they will encounter someone or perhaps an entire society that is unlike their own. Therefore, *Moy Moy* would be an exceptional book to integrate into a multi-cultural lesson plan. The concept of the Chinese New Year could be compared and contrasted to how "typical Americans" celebrate the New Year. Some other activities that would be enjoyable for students

you 
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include the construction of their own parade. In order for this to occur, students could make their own lanterns or they could collaborate to produce one giant lion.

I would unquestionably recommend this book to a friend. It is full of fun and interesting facts, at least in my opinion, that are presented in the form of a children's fiction book. From my experience, I do not like to read facts from a non-fiction book, but if these facts are presented in an out of the ordinary way, then I am more liable to pay attention to the fine points. Also, the illustrations in *Moy Moy* are captivating due to their bright colors and explicit details, which I find to be important when choosing a children's book. If I quickly flip through a book that contains illustrations and the pictures are dull and boring I am easily turned away. Hopefully I have captivated your attention and you are eager to check out this book. 

good
Sincerely,

Sahara Kipfer

summary
Connections
recommendat
grammar - 1) - excellent! You are specific
with your discussion, +
I appreciate that!

Reader's Response Journal for Children's Book Rubric

Name Sahara K.

Date 4.3.09

Name of Book: Moy Moy

Score 10 /10

	Unacceptable	Weak	Acceptable	Extraordinary	
Quality	0	.5	1	2	Score
Summary	Not evident the writer read the assignment. Is fewer than five sentences	main points barely discussed	Somewhat evident the writer read the assignment; some ambiguity	Writer clearly read the assignment; main ideas of chapter summarized	<u>2</u>
Quality	0	.5	1	2	
Personal connection	Writer's connection is missing or completely not relative	Writer's connection is barely discussed	Writer's connection is somewhat developed	Writer's connection is clearly developed and discussed	<u>2</u>
Quality	0	.5	1	2	
Professional connection or second personal connection	Writer's connection is missing or completely not relative	Writer's connection is barely discussed	Writer's connection is somewhat developed	Writer's connection is clearly developed and discussed	<u>2</u>
Quality	0	.5	1	2	
Recommendation/opinion of book	No recommendation / opinion is made	Recommendation and justification is tacked on and not developed	Recommendation/ opinion is clear; support of opinion is somewhat developed	Clear recommendation/ opinion about the book is supported with specific details	<u>2</u>
Quality	0	.5	1	2	
Writing conventions	Not written in letter format or contains more than three grammatical errors	Written in letter format with errors; contains three grammatical errors	Written in letter format; response letter contains two grammatical errors	Written in letter format; response letter contains one or no errors	<u>2</u>

COMMENTS:

*Great work,
Sahara!
I love reading
your letters. They
are always so
developed!*