

## ***I See the Sun in China* Mini-Unit Plan**

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### **Designer:**

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### **Mini-Unit Introduction:**

This unit is designed for a third grade class of twenty students with varying levels of reading attainment (assessed using Guided Reading levels and The Teacher's College assessment tool.)

#### **Student goals:**

**Universal Understandings:** To present an interactive read aloud using realistic fiction told in first person narrative; students can deepen their appreciation of Chinese culture, and that differences exist between people of the same country by interacting with the text through the use of the drama process and role play, discussion, drawing and written reflections.

**Content and Language Objectives:** The students will actively listen to the realistic fiction story, *I Can See the Sun* and they will reflect on the themes by envisioning themselves as the protagonist ( an unnamed girl) and a sense of being there will be created through partner dialogue, role play situations, and other critical thinking activities. [The students will also examine the strategies used to the explore text. What did we do?]

## **Contextual Information:**

*I See the Sun in China*: Dedie King is the author and Judith Inglese is the illustrator.

Publisher: Satya House, 2010.

***“If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children”—MOHANDAS GANDHI***

**Publisher:** Satya House has a website dedicated to promoting the mission of cultural understanding through their publications. There is a social justice theme to the books they publish. “Welcome to Satya House ... where ignorance is not bliss, knowledge is.” (Satya House, 2015)

**Summary:** The idea that children are our hope for promoting a more understanding world for all people is clearly evident in *I See the Sun in China*, where the text is presented through the eyes of a child, and reveals the child's emotions and sensual experiences of her journey to the city from the rural area; also symbolizing a journey of appreciation from the past /old China to the present and new. The author has an agenda to promote cultural understanding that we may all live in different parts of the world yet we all reside beneath the same sun; the sun is a symbol that connects us all.

As the child journeys through her day she meets people of all ages and she shares her appreciation for her cultural identity, history, the adults she encounters, and ends with her hopes for the future in the modern China.

This book presents a glimpse of China through the eyes of a little girl, as opposed to traditional travel books that presents a country through adult eyes, thus having more appeal and connection with younger people.

This picture book, published in 2010, is the first in a series of six set in the countries of China, Myanmar /Burma, Mexico, Russia, Afghanistan, and Nepal. The quote by Gandhi is written in the form of a mission

statement in the introduction to the website, and gives us an idea of the critical literacy, democratic, and social justice understandings of those involved with these publications including the author and illustrator.

Another outstanding feature of this series is that the books are presented in both English and the language of the country. Visually; the publishers have gone against the norm and presented the text with the host language written first on the page above the English. The importance of this is that it may positively affect how the reader is positioned when he or she engages with this book. A Chinese student in an English dominant classroom or an English Language Learner may feel even more validated by seeing this book. It is an opportunity for the English language learner to acquire new vocabulary while feeling at ease (their affective filter is diminished) because of the familiar content. Chinese terms and phrases are used authentically in the text, and the book features a glossary in both languages .

The publishers suggest that the books would appeal to ages four and up. The genre is certainly realistic fiction, but the reference to actual places and facts about life in China makes this a good introduction to informational texts for younger people.

**Geographical region:** China

**Genre:** Fiction

**Cultural themes:** Migration, old vs. new, past vs. present, modernization, symbolism, cultural respect, affirmation of identity and cultural history, and differences.

**Author background:** Dedie King was a Peace Corps volunteer in Nepal in the mid sixties where she taught school. She uses her past and present world travel experiences as the basis for the stories in the, *I See the Sun* series

**Illustrator background:** Judith Inglese captures the idea of past and present, old and new, through the use of mixed mediums. She creates

scenes with collages made from photographs, paper cut-outs, and drawings.

### **Contextual Information References:**

Satya House Publications. (n.d.) *Welcome to Satya House*. Retrieved from <http://www.satyahouse.com/>

I See the Sun Books. (2015). *Introduction*. Retrieved from <http://iseethesunbooks.com/>

### **Learning Experiences:**

#### **Brief Theoretical Framework to Unit:**

##### **Critical Reading:**

- Including critical reading pedagogy is an essential part of any effective reading program. Interactive engagement with text allows children to critically explore texts in multimodal ways. It is said that in the early years (pre-k to grade three) children learn to read and in the succeeding years children read to learn. My philosophy is that children are never too young to engage in interactive activities that promote their engagement with text in deeper ways. Children have feelings, and they do think about themselves, the world and their place in the world. It is not only a matter of how does one present broad issues that are reflected in stories such as racism, sexism, divorce etc. It is also about understanding democracy, social justice, empowerment, empathy, and love for our fellow human beings.
- We want readers to, "ask questions about everything they read" (Rudman, 1995)

##### **Pre-Lesson Ideas:**

- Activity 1: Making connection through discussions – honing and activating funds of knowledge / prior knowledge prior to interactive experience. Brainstorming what students know about China. Perhaps inviting any Chinese students or parents to talk about their country.

- Activity 2: Prior to engaging with this book the children should be made aware of the practice of Tai Chi, and Kwan Yin’s Statue as these are significant representations of culture for some Chinese people.
- You Tube videos to help prepare the children are listed in the reference section below.
- Activity 3. Small group / Whole group discussion of family visits or outings - What other things do families do together? How do you imagine it feels when families do things together? Would you imagine these are the same for all people? Make a drawing of family time that was special or meaningful.
- Activity 4. Describe the text features of a realistic fiction story that brings it alive for the reader: Setting – time and place, an event or problem to be solved, (the action and drama that keeps the story moving)
- Activity 5: Text decoder: circle the words you know the meaning of and leave blank the ones you don’t know the meaning of. Turn and talk to your partner about the words on the page. Some are words that are found in the story and some are themes explored in the story.
  - differences
  - opposites
  - changes
  - country
  - city
  - fancy
  - ordinary
  - history
  - family
- Post Activity: whole group discussion questions
  - How is this book different from travel books about China?
  - Why do you think the author does not give the girl a name?
  - Would you give her a name if you were the author?

I can See the Sun Pages	Four Resource Model Luke and Freebody (1992)	Multi Modal Interactive Activity
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<p><b>P.4</b></p>	<p>Text Participant</p>	<p><b>Role Play</b>                  Lie on the floor and imagine that you are in bed and you are just waking up. Have a nice stretch. Today you are excited. Can you pretend that you are about to go on a trip? How might you be?</p>
<p><b>P.5</b></p>	<p>Text Participant</p>	<p><b>Role Play</b>                  Turn and Talk .One of you is sister the other is brother. Imagine that you are watching grandfather what might you say to each other?</p>
<p><b>Any page</b></p> <p><b>P.32</b></p>	<p><b>Summative</b></p> <p>Text Critic /Text Analyst</p> <p>Text User</p>	<p>What do you think about the illustrators use of real photos and drawings to make these collages? Why do you think she did this ?</p> <p><b>Create a collage of your own family gathering, outing, or trip to the city. Use text and drawing.</b></p> <p><b>If the girl had a cell phone</b>                  Imagine that you are the girl and you call a friend to tell about your time in the city.</p> <p><b>Create a diary entry</b></p>

**The Four Roles of the Reader**

**Text Decoder:** Decoders can crack the text’s code. They can read it silently or aloud.

**Text Participant:** Participants are engaged active readers. They ask questions. They underline, highlight and annotate texts. They summarize the key ideas or they become involved in the story.

**Text User:** Engage with a variety of texts regularly and frequently and so become familiar with their shape and form.

**Text Analyst:** Try to understand the power relations that are at work in everyday texts. They want to know whose interests are served by the text.

### **Learning Experience References:**

Lam, P. (2008). *Tai Chi for beginners*. Retrieved from

<https://www.youtube.com/user/drpaullamtaichi?v=nNWPk6tYoUM>

Music for Body and Soul. (2010). *Qi Gong – Shaolin Qi Gong for your early morning exercise*. Retrieved from

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OMH-Zm\\_xNE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OMH-Zm_xNE)

Rudman, M. (1995). *Children's Literature: An issues approach. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Ryoga, H.J. (2006). *Tai Chi 24-form*. Retrieved from

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBvF6r6DOvc>

Scherlen, A. (2011). *Allan journeys to the great statue of Guanyin on the island of Putuoshan*. Retrieved from

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghFrvDnq6Z4>