



Last Stop on Market Street **Mini-Unit Plan**

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The Mini-Unit Designer:

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Introducing the Mini-Unit:

This unit is designed for classroom instruction in any integrated classroom in grades K-5, specifically in Springfield, Massachusetts. This lesson can be used in small groups of special education students, in full classes, or on grade level or school level teams.

Contextualizing the Picture Book:

Title: *Last Stop on Market Street*

Author: Matt de la Peña

Illustrated by: Christian Robinson

Publisher: G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, NY: 2015

Genre: Literature, Fiction

Summary:

CJ and his nana take a bus ride after church on Sunday. While CJ laments all the things he doesn't have (or has to do), his grandmother points out how those very things are special. She shows him how their routine Sunday is beautiful in a way that is special to the grandparent/grandchild relationship. Themes of poverty, wants/needs, class, community service, and gratitude pervade.

About the authors and illustrators:

Author Matt de la Peña

[Voya Magazine interviews Matt de la Peña](#) to learn more about the author and his life. He answers questions kids might be interested in (*If you could have 3 wishes...; What superpower would you choose?*). Others revolve around his personality (*How would people describe you in 3 words?*). Some questions get into his methods (*When you sit down to write, what do you need around you?*).

[Sharing the Newberry Love: Book Trailer Spotlight](#)

[Video 1](#) Beginning with his background, de la Peña starts, "...it's a pretty unlikely story that I became an author." He describes his childhood not being a great reader or student, and fully enthralled with basketball. He was the first of his family to go to college, and once there he fell in love with literature. When writing, he attempts to find an entry point with the reader. This gets back to why he didn't connect with reading when he was younger; he didn't feel like he was a member of the story's world. The video includes images from his youth and discusses his novels, including action and adventure stories. He discusses how reading is the ultimate form of empathy, and how reading can make people understand the world around them.

[Video 2](#) Matt de la Peña reads aloud a section of *The Last Stop on Market Street*. Video with images from the text.

[CNN Interview](#) where Matt de la Peña speaks to diversity in YA books. He names *The Color Purple* as the novel that was his gateway to literature. Facts about diversity in YA novels and texts are given, as de la Peña's books primarily feature Mexican-American characters.

[Newberry Medal Acceptance Speech 2016 \(video\)](#)

(*sb*t* is used at about 3:05 or so, speech begins about 4:00)

[Newberry Medal Acceptance Speech 2016 \(text\)](#)

Matt de la Peña eloquently speaks to his childhood experiences, not seeing himself in books, and his inspiration and intention to write books with Mexican-American characters. He makes adult-themed jokes, so this is a better background-building piece for adults and educators.

Illustrator Christian Robinson

[School Library Journal interviews Christian Robinson](#). Robinson discusses his inspiration for a new cover, how he picks projects, and who his role models are. He discusses how his previous work at Sesame Street Workshop and Pixar inform his current work.

[PBS video interview with Christian Robinson](#) (2:32 mins) on the art of making pictures for children, from the PBS series *Brief but Spectacular*. He discusses how when younger, he felt like he couldn't control the world around him, but he could control the art on his piece of paper. Great images from his work are included in a slideshow presentation.

[Blaine.org Seven Impossible Things Before Breakfast interview](#) with Christian Robinson, including many images of his work. From 2012, so some newer works are not present. At that time, he was based in San Francisco and his preferred method was paper cut-out. He discusses his work *Harlem's Little Blackbird* and *Rain*.

Awards:

[2016 Caldecott Honor Book](#)

Information about Caldecott Award: “The Caldecott Medal was named in honor of nineteenth-century English illustrator Randolph Caldecott. It is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.” From this website.

[Winner of the 2016 Newbery Medal](#)

Information about the Newbery Medal: “The Newbery Medal was named for eighteenth-century British bookseller John Newbery. It is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children.” From this website.

[2016 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Book](#)

Information about the Coretta Scott King Award: “...given annually to outstanding African American authors and illustrators of books for children and young adults that demonstrate an appreciation of African American culture and universal human values. The award commemorates the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and honors his wife, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, for her courage and determination to continue the work for peace and world brotherhood.” From this website.

Media of Illustrations: Acrylic paintings and collage.

VTS and WBA/CMA

Learning Experiences:

Learning Experience Design #1: “Gratitude for Our Greats”

CJ and his Nana have a special relationship. Together with your students, look at the dedication page. Both author and illustrator have dedicated this book to their grandparents. Discuss with the class: What is so great about grandparents?

Read and compare books about grandparents including:

- * Ada, A. F., & Savadier, E. (2002). *I love Saturdays y domingos*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.
- * DePaola, T. (1981). *Now one foot, now the other*. New York: Putnam.
- * Dahl, R. (1964). *Charlie and the chocolate factory*. New York: Bantam Skylark.
- * Parr, T. (2011). *The grandma book*. New York: Little, Brown.
- * Lord, J., & Paschkis, J. (2005). *Here comes Grandma!*. New York: Henry Holt & Co.
- * Juster, N., & Raschka, C. (2013). *The Hello, Goodbye window*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children.
- * Dempsey, K., & Denise, C. (2013). *Me with you*. New York: Philomel Books.
- * Henkes, K. (2002). *Grandpa & Bo*. New York: Greenwillow Books.
- * Ackerman, K., & Gammell, S. (2013). *Song and dance man*. New York: Knopf Books for Young Readers.

- * Polacco, P. (1998). *The bee tree*. New York, NY: PaperStar.
- * Peck, R. (2011). *A long way from Chicago*. New York: Puffin Books.
- * Velasquez, E. (2004). *Grandma's records*. New York: Walker & Co.
- * Velasquez, E. (2013). *Grandma's gift*. New York: Walker & Co.

Additional questions for class discussion: How are the grandparent/grandchild relationships in these stories like ones you know? How are they different? Student connections can be charted.

Multimodal Families and Communities Connections:

Students should interview an adult in their family of the age of their parent (but it doesn't have to be their mom or dad). The interview will focus on how the parent-aged person was raised by *their* parent (of the age of the child's grandparent, but it doesn't have to be their exact grandmother or grandfather).

For example, a child may interview her mother about her grandfather. She might ask, "Mom, what was Grumpy like as a dad?" "Mom, what did you used to do with Grumpy when you got home from school?"

In another example, "Auntie Beth, what was Buela like when you were a kid?"

Ideally, the child would know both the interviewee and the person to gain the greatest perspective possible.

Additionally, the child can interview the grandparent about a parent. "Buela, what was Mami like as a kid?" These types of questions can open up intergenerational conversations that can illuminate family traditions and dynamics.

For children for whom this is not possible, an interview can happen between any inter-generational adults to provide perspective.

Students can share their favorite portions of the interviews in class.

Additional Multimodal Opportunities:

Students can write up their interviews and publish in a blog format.

www.wix.com

Resources to build a FREE website (with ad-free pay options) and publish original images. Online How-to guides are quick and easy reference for first-time developers.

www.wordpress.com

Resources to build and publish a free blog. Format is similar to common word/pages applications, so this would be a great resource to both new and experienced bloggers.

Creating Multimodal Interdisciplinary Opportunities:

Interviews can be voice-recorded and edited for podcast production.

A podcast can be produced and shared with families, staff, and community.

[How to Create Podcasts with Your Students](#)

This PDF, from the Smithsonian, gives step-by-step instructions on how to create a podcast with your students. The guide even addresses legal issues when working with young children and online publication of their voices. They provide further extensions and resources in this guide.

Learning Experience Design #2: Class discussion and close reading

Share an introduction like this with your students:

A prediction is a guess as to what might happen next, based on the information you have. As we read, the images and words we take in provide us information about the story and our minds predict what might happen next. This text may lead the reader to the idea that Grandmother and CJ do not “have” things, where CJ asks why they have to take a bus and why he doesn’t have a music player. By showing us CJ does not have these things, it leads the reader to assume that CJ might be a recipient of food at the soup kitchen. However, on the last page, we see CJ and his grandmother serving food at the kitchen.

- * How did this ending make you feel? Did you predict a different ending?
- * Have you ever helped someone in need? Do you ever receive help of any kind (from a teacher, learning how to read, from a friend giving a hug when you are upset)?
- * How can we be a help to each other?

Discuss further: What assumptions do we hold about people who have/own certain material items? How do we think they live? How do we think they are as people when they have/don’t have something?

Ask your students to look closely at each bus rider. Most of the bus riders are pictured holding or with an object. What assumptions are made about the rider based on their items/appearance? Are these assumptions always accurate? What assumptions do people make about you? Are they always accurate?

Notice the endpapers, asking your students to look at the items. Some items represent material culture. With Grandmother’s reframing of CJ’s comments, we are being encouraged to consider and reconsider what is of value to us.

Activity:

Pick one bus rider. Write a story about that person’s day as they ride the bus. Where are they coming from? How was their Sunday morning? Where are they going? What are they up to today? How are they thinking and feeling as their day goes on?

Multimodal Families and Communities Connections:

Students, with their families, can take 1-5 pictures of themselves, holding item(s) they value. Pictures can be printed 8x11 and posted around the room.

Each student picks a picture and writes or tells a story about how they think the child obtained the object, and what it might mean to them. After, the child in the image tells or writes their actual story and discusses similarities and differences of the two versions of the same story.

Discussion of value, material possession, and class may encourage perspective-taking and empathy between students.

Additional Multimodal Opportunities:

[A photo documentation series of children around the world with their favorite toys.](#)

Allow students to spend time looking at one picture. Think about and discuss these questions:

- * How do you think this child lives? Why do you think they chose this toy?
- * Have you ever played with these toys? How do you play with them? How do you think they play with them?
- * What assumptions do we hold about this child, based on these toys? How they live, if/how they go to school, what other material items they may possess and what that might mean.
- * What are our assumptions about class?

Creating Multimodal Interdisciplinary Opportunities:

The collection of stories and images could be collected and bound in a book, or published online in a blog or website.

www.wix.com

Resources to build a FREE website (with ad-free pay options) and publish original images. Online How-to guides are quick and easy reference for first-time developers.

www.wordpress.com

Resources to build and publish a free blog. Format is similar to common word/pages applications, so this would be a great resource to both new and experienced bloggers.

Learning Experience Design #3: “Watching the World with Their Ears”

On the page with three pictures, we can see CJ about to listen to live music on the bus. Four people close their eyes to “feel the magic of the music.” On the next page, there is a full page spread of CJ with his eyes closed, envisioning the music.

Read the story through, pausing so students can see the pictures. Read for enjoyment.

Look back at the page that begins, “Two older boys got on next.” Share with your students: On the page with three pictures, we can see CJ about to listen to live music on the bus. Four people close their eyes to “feel the magic of the music”.

Using VTS questions, analyze the last picture on this page and record on chart paper.

- * What’s going on in this picture?
- * What do you see that makes you say that?

- * What else can you find?
- * What do the words say?
- * What are the assumptions about class, and people who take this bus?

Look specifically at the characters:

- * How do you relate yourself to the character or illustration?
- * Make your body look like the character's body. How do you feel?
- * How does the character feel?
- * What do you think they are thinking about?
- * What do you think about the characters based on the words?
- * What do you think about the characters based on the illustrations?
- * Who is represented in this double page spread?
- * Who is not? Why might that be?

Turn to the next page, a full page spread of CJ.

Using VTS questions, analyze the whole picture on this page and record on chart paper.

- * What's going on in this picture?
- * What do you see that makes you say that?
- * What else can you find?
- * What do the words say?

Look specifically at the characters:

- * How do you relate yourself to the character or illustration?
- * Make your body look like the character's body. How do you feel?
- * How does closing his eyes help CJ to "feel the magic"?

Multimodal Families and Communities Connections:

Have children and families come together, and sit quiet and still. Play for them a piece of music from this list. Together, have them talk about what might be happening in the music.

Have the children and families come together again, this time, with their eyes closed. Set up the visualization by saying "Close your eyes to FEEL the MAGIC of the MUSIC".

After each selection, ask children and families to think about and discuss:

- * Does this music feel familiar? Where have you heard it before?
- * Does it feel different? Why? What about it?
- * How does this music help reflect on our understanding of the world? How does it give background to our sociocultural and historical contexts?
- * Which music is represented here?
- * Which music is missing from this activity?
- * Is "your" music represented?

Have children and families create a drawing that they imagined together, that illustrates the pictures they had in their heads using acrylic and collage, similar to the illustrator.

[Classical Spanish Acoustic Guitar](#)

[Mariachi](#)

[Classical](#)

[Blues](#)

[Caribbean/Steel Drums](#)

[Rock](#)

[Bluegrass](#)

[Tibetan Chanting](#)

[African Traditional \(Zulu\)](#)

Additional Multimodal Opportunities:

Other art mediums can be explored here—pictures can be created with chalk on black paper, or vertically hung paper with paints. Sculpture could also be a considered medium for expression.

Additionally, dances can be constructed instead of artwork. Have members of each family group hold each other’s hands. Explain that they will keep their eyes closed and move to the music, but that they must remain in physical contact with each other. Record these interpretive “contact dances” with video and play back so that each family can see themselves performing.

Creating Multimodal Interdisciplinary Opportunities:

A public gallery of art can be put up in school hallways, malls, or post office. Play the music that inspired the artwork so that people can experience music and visuals together. A family picture and short written summaries can be displayed next to each piece, in a museum style.

A video of the dancing may be published to YouTube or private server so that families may share the experience with their friends and extended families. Obviously previous permissions required to publish online.

Summative Multimodal Learning Experience: Bus Trip

Conduct a paired reading of *Maybe Something Beautiful*.

(Campoy, F. I., Howell, T., & López, R. [2016]. *Maybe Something Beautiful: How Art Transformed a Neighborhood*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.)

Discuss Mira’s work with the painter. What is beautiful? Who gets to decide what is beautiful in a neighborhood?

In *The Last Stop On Market Street*, CJ wonders “how his nana always found beautiful where he never even thought to look.” What does that mean, given both what Mira and Nana see and define as “beautiful”?

Work with your local or nearby public transportation system to secure a bus for your class. Operated like a traditional field trip (with permission slips, etc., as required by your school), the bus is the actual trip. Schedule a route with the driver that highlights many different neighborhoods of your city/town. Give each family/child a clipboard with paper and pencil so they can sketch what they perceive to be the most beautiful parts of their city, as they drive by them in person.

You could stop along the way to have a picnic lunch at a park or library.

www.pvta.com

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.7 Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.9 Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 4-5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Next Steps for Your Learning:

Teaching tips—ways to give feedback to students on artwork:

[Feedback process on artwork](#)

[Feedback for drama and specific examples of phrasing to work from](#)

[Praising phrases for process instead of product](#)