Narrative

1. *Describe the program or program series, and how the school library and librarian were involved. If the program is ongoing, use the information on programming and activities from the previous school year (2011-2012) only.*

   - *Include the title of the program or program series.*
   - *Explain the humanities theme or topic emphasized in the program.*
   - *Explain why you chose this program.*
   - *Describe in detail the program or program series.*
   - *Describe the planning process and collaborative relationships involved.*

Transforming Tales

In library, third graders study fairy tales from around the world. We begin by defining the elements of a fairy tale ("Once upon a time," sets of 3, "Happily ever after," talking animals, etc). From there, we examine common themes (such as "rags to riches" story as in Cinderella, good trumps evil (as in Red Riding Hood, etc) and how these themes are repeated across cultures. This commonality underscores the humanities theme of connectedness, of what makes humans human. I chose to develop this program because it complements the 3rd grade's cross-cultural curriculum, particularly in social studies.

Third grade social studies curriculum designed to help students develop a deeper understanding of the interrelationships between the US (and themselves) and other places in the world. The year starts with a focus on geography. Students begin to see the connection between climate, and geography and how it shapes a culture. In the late fall, students study two or three countries in depth. In April, the study culminates in a student-run cultural fair, designed to showcase student knowledge and cultural awareness of a particular country. In library we move from the general to the specific and look at fairy tales from the country the students are now studying in the classroom. The specific country changes from year to year. Students divide into self-selected groups (2-3 participants) and write a fairy tale set in that country, drawing from examples to which they have been introduced in library. Further, we include the math teacher to employ mathematical/logical thinking when producing the tale (e.g., outlining and following a story line). As a final product, students produce a finished tale and an illustration of one of its scenes using LEGOs®.

The planning process involves coordinating with two third grade teachers and the lower school math teacher. To this end, we met bi-weekly to discuss progress, student groups challenges and changes to schedule. The project is not confined to the library and I often visited the class to help.

2. *Describe the involvement of others in the program. Letters of support (to be uploaded below) should emphasize the humanities program and the impact the program had on students and the school community, not the library program or the librarian.*

   - *Identify the number of student participants.*

- *Describe how the program features higher-order thinking skills through student involvement.*
- *Describe the benefits that ensued, including how you measured success.*
- *Describe the involvement and awareness of parents, administrators and community leaders.*
- *Explain why you feel the program is exemplary or goes beyond normal school library media programming activities.*

The entire third grade participates: 26 students. Though writing is often a solitary activity, students must learn to collaborate: deciding on the plot together, deciding who will be the scribe and who will work on the LEGO illustration. Students must incorporate what they have learned about the culture they are studying and weave it into a fairy tale. This story form has some very specific characteristics that students must also learn and use. Students were evaluated on how well they well they presented material (e.g., "sloppy" copy vs final), used the information they had learned and worked as a team.

Community service learning is closely integrated into this unit. Students are given the opportunity to translate the increasing understanding of themselves and their place as global citizens, as well as make their responsibilities to others into something tangible. For example, when studying Pakistan, children visit a local mosque and conduct a book drive for that Muslim community. As to the exemplary part: this program is a true collaboration across disciplines: students use art time to make drawings, music to learn about a culture through its songs and dances.

This project extends beyond library walls. Teachers integrated an online database (CultureGrams) purchased by library, into their classroom, further underscoring the fact that library materials are no longer confined to a physical space. This project also encompasses many departments in the school: Arts are involved as students worked on pieces that were "in the style of" the country they studied (for example, when studies focused on China, students learned to make brush paintings), math department, music (learning traditional songs and instruments in China), physical education (learning traditional dances) along with visits made to local institutions and a pen pal program. Library served as backbone to student scaffolding. Used knowledge to create new understanding; e.g., find connections by synthesizing previous knowledge with new knowledge; in the lexicon of AASL, "Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge" (AASL, 2007).

3. *Provide evidence of a curriculum component.*

- *Describe the relationship of the program or program series to the school's curricular goals and to the state's learning standards.*
- *State how the American Association of School Librarians Standards for the 21st Century Learner were incorporated into the program.*
- *Provide evidence of a curriculum component for classroom treatment of the humanities theme or topic emphasized in the program.*

- *Explain how the program goes beyond the school's standard curriculum requirements and programs.*

This program is tightly integrated with the school's core mission of creating global citizens who can assume leadership roles, but it goes beyond the standard curriculum by being a truly collaborative effort across departments. It brings the library squarely into the school's academic arena, transforming library time from a 19th century artifact to a core part of the 3rd grade curriculum. The culminating cultural fair allows students to use a number of skills: as they explore other cultures of the world, students begin to develop research skills, demonstrate oral language skills as well as leadership roles in conveying information to younger and older students. The program also requires students to achieve our state's Common Core goals for third grade reading, writing (effective use of language and age-appropriate vocabulary) and staying on topic. Further, the program, like the state standards, stresses the importance of the writing-reading connection, requiring students to use literary and information texts.

This program touches upon each of the AASL standards:

1. Inquire, think critically and gain knowledge. Students gain knowledge when they learn about fairy tales and other story forms (such as "How and Why" stories). In this program, children learn that each country has its unique traditions, but that there are common threads throughout cultures.

2. Draw Conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations and create new knowledge: Students create "new" knowledge when they create a fairy tale of their own. After examining common tales, students come to understand that the tales are a culture's attempt to understand themselves, and to find meaning in the world. These stories also reflect what a culture holds up as important: what is considered appropriate behavior.

3. Share knowledge and participate ethically as members of our democratic society. Because fairy tales are introduced as a model for ethical behavior, children learn from them. When they write their stories, they share with the community what they have learned.

4. Pursue personal and aesthetic growth. We believe the program models a process for pursuing personal interests. Students are encouraged to create in writing and pictorially.

4. Describe how this program might be replicated.

- *Provide examples of how this program or program series might serve as a model or springboard for humanities programming in other schools.*
- *Identify key components of the program that were essential to the program's success.*
- *Identify any key components that might need to be modified for use in other settings.*

Using this project as a benchmark, we have begun successfully collaborating with other classrooms in the school; of particular note, we are working with the middle school which heretofore had little contact with the library. We believe this program is easily modifiable. Older

children could study other written/oral forms, such as short stories, and then write and/or illustrate their own works. Or, the program could be tried in another discipline. For example, if students were studying the American Revolution in Social Studies, in the library they could read an historical fiction/diary about the Revolutionary War, then write and illustrate their own narratives.

One of the largest factors in the success of this program is the classroom teachers. Their willingness to participate, modify classroom lessons and let the librarian lead has been instrumental, since the program requires scheduling that permits students to work for a period of days rather than a weekly library meeting. All of the tools we used are relatively low cost.

5.   *Describe the results of this program.*

- *What would you change about the program?*
- *What were some unexpected benefits or reactions to the program?*
- *How did this program take the library to the next level in terms of school and community collaboration, programming and student impact?*

We believe this project gives school librarians a venue for showcasing what 21st century libraries have to offer. By working together with teachers from more than one discipline, students are the true winners. They learn how to integrate classroom content with broader skills such as critically thinking, solving problems, and making decisions. Students also use essential reading and writing skills.

As to program changes, this year we are joining with the online collaboration centre, iEARN (http://www.iearn.org). Our students will join with students from other parts of the world to share fairy and folk tales. Our plan is to use these real-time interactions to not only broaden the students' horizons, but to show the underlying commonality between what may initially appear as disparate cultures. We chose iEARN because it is safe and meets our school's acceptable use policy, while at the same time provides our students with a broad window on the world.