An example of building a thematic unit is much like being a collector. You and the children will be gathering the indigenous playground poetry your class uses everyday, then you'll learn about it so you can share these sources with others interested in your work/play.

You can plan this all by yourself, get the other teachers in the school involved - make it interdisciplinary, and cross curricular, involve students naturally. Children's indigenous playground poetry has enormous value and credibility as the basis for the language arts curriculum that sets the planning process in motion. This is the literature foundation so fundamental to the success of thematic teaching and your enthusiasm.

1) Literature
Having as many primary source materials you can collect is firsthand information. The general rule of thumb is that there can never have too many songs and chants collected.

2) Integration
Sharing what the students bring into the room, they already know all the literature by heart!! It is an AUTHENTIC experience that you can share.
Next, students might enjoy working in groups to write their poetry into their personal books. This project leads into their weekly spelling tests.

This literature leads the way into art projects and content-area connections. Using a combination of music, art, and technology, whole-class, small-group, paired, and individual tasks. Planned integration occurs when the teacher sets the stage for an interdisciplinary experience. Mindful of curricular objectives the teacher balances what "needs to be covered" with what naturally develops out of children's enthusiastic curiosity and willingness to participate.

Flexibility is central, as teachers reconfigure the traditional scope and sequence of the curriculum in new ways, integrating literacy, music, and technology. Now the subject-area textbooks are viewed as just another tool, rather than as the sole decision maker for instruction. The outcome, however, is generally a more comprehensive curriculum, filled with extensive learning experiences, rather than the former minimal content considered necessary for basic mastery, which is the beauty of and why we use a thematic reading curriculum.

3.Collaboration

Thematic teaching, it should be readily apparent, is labor-intensive. It takes extra time to replace lessons based strictly on textbooks or workbooks with something new.

4. Community Resources

A vital component is making a real-world connection for students. Parents can play an important role in sharing their experience and expertise.

5) Time

It takes time to plan thematic units, and the units themselves generally last several weeks. Because the learning is integrated and collaborative, momentum builds and sustains motivation. Thus the topic can be explored both in its breadth and depth.
6) Empowerment

Despite the fact that empowerment has become somewhat of a buzzword, it is a real factor in thematic classrooms where teachers have consciously chosen to teach in a new way. In particular, thematic teaching challenges both over reliance on textbooks and the compartmentalized school day and its subjects.

Conclusion

Visit the classroom of someone involved in thematic teaching. Often one can hear the excitement in the hall, as singing and art projects spill out of classroom.

Please start collecting the children’s playground songs and chants that they already know to use for your reading curriculum.

Get Started with the National Children’s Folksong Repository

Learn Why Music Makes You Smarter

DON’T BE AFRAID TO TRY THIS OUT

YOU CAN DO THIS – IT WILL WORK OUT GREAT!!!

Karen Ellis